

# The FORUM

Vol IV No 7 16-30 April 1989 (Fortnightly) Rupees Two

## Gazette

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## Restore Credibility And Mutual Trust To Solve The Crisis In Punjab

By K.S. Khosla

**T**he announcement of the Home Minister, Mr. Buta Singh, at Gurdaspur recently that the process of initiating consultations with the Opposition leaders will start immediately to find a political solution of the Punjab problem should not raise high hopes. The Centre has been blowing hot and cold or carrying on its policy of the stick and the carrot for too long and, therefore, the observers of the Punjab scene are not taking the latest move seriously. The cynics among them say bluntly that no solution will be possible in an election year for the simple reason that neither the Congress (I) nor the Opposition would like to give the credit to the other for finding a solution when elections to the Lok Sabha are only nine months away. It is worth repeating that the Prime Minister proposed on board

the plane on his return journey from Stockholm in January 1988 that he would consider the proposal to hold an all-party meeting to discuss the problem with his Cabinet colleagues. Nothing hap-

pened for nine months. Then the Prime Minister revived the proposal in September 1988 during his visit to Punjab. More than six months have passed and yet no

Any attempt at arriving at a solution of the Punjab problem without restoring the mutual trust and credibility is not going to be durable

Opposition leader has been invited for talks. It is to be hoped that by the time this article appears in print, Mr. Buta Singh would have called some Opposition leaders, if not all, for consultations. But the question is what is going to be the outcome of these consultations? What are they going to discuss particularly when the views of all Opposition parties on

the Punjab problem are already known. The parties are going to repeat *ad nauseum* their well publicised stands on the problem. The Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, no doubt, took a bold initiative in 1985 by signing the accord with the late Sant Harchand Singh Longowal but everyone knows that the accord is not dead as dodo. Much water has flown down the Beas and Ravi—the areas between these two rivers has become the 'battleground' between the State police and their terrorists—and there is need for signing a new accord. Astute politicians here say that the Prime Minister will not have the courage to sign a new accord lest the Opposition should take credit for it and vice versa. Political observers here point out that the compulsions of elections will negate the

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## "I Know Mrs Gandhi's Third Assassin Personally"

Mr Satya Narayan Sinha tells THE FORUM GAZETTE

**Mr. Satya Narayan Sinha, former Congress MP and a close associate of Mrs Indira Gandhi, reveals the untold story of her assassination. Mr. Sinha claims that he personally knows who the real conspirators are and he adds that he can even identify the culprits by face. Here are excerpts from an interview that he had with THE FORUM GAZETTE:**

In a recent issue of THE FORUM GAZETTE there appeared a letter that you wrote to Prof. Madhu Dandavate, MP, saying that you had witnessed the televised film of what happened on 31 October 1984 picturing one man, other than Beant Singh and Satwant Singh, who was firing at Mrs Gandhi putting his sten gun on Satwant's shoulder. And that is how she was murdered, you said in your letter. Will you please tell us in some more detail about what you saw on TV on Mrs Gandhi's assassination day.

Yes, I wrote that letter to Prof. Madhu Dandavate. He brought up this issue in the Lok Sabha while a discussion on Punjab was going on. Mr.

Dandavate wanted to read the letter aloud in the Lok Sabha. But the Speaker, Mr Balram Jharkar intervened and did not allow him to read it. Then the Speaker assured Mr Dandavate that it would be forwarded to the Home Ministry for further investigation.

The London Times newspaper was aware of the fact that Peter Ustinov was making a film on Mrs Gandhi. Mr Ustinov had an arrangement with the newspaper for direct transmission of what he took on the camera to the newspaper's office. It was about 4.30 a.m. in England (in India 9.30 a.m.) when Mrs Gandhi was shot dead in India. The correspondent in the newspaper's office who was monitoring Mr Ustinov's film on the screen saw this incident at

the same time. The moment she was fired at, the camera at 1 Safdarjung Road was switched off. But the same scene was again telecasted by the BBC at 6.00 am.

I was sleeping at my residence in Birmingham when this incident took place. A friend of mine, who was also an officer of Britain's secret service, woke me up to tell this story and he asked me to switch on my TV so that we could watch the morning news programme. I turned on the TV and saw myself that one man standing behind Satwant Singh putting his sten gun on his shoulder and firing at Mrs Gandhi. The very next moment Mrs Gandhi yelled in agony and fell unconscious on the ground.

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LETTERS

**State Terrorism And Violation Of Human Rights**

**H**orrible news of State terrorism have been coming in the national press since quite some time. Amnesty International, the organisation which is responsible for promoting human rights, has been quite active but so far as compliance of its directions on the part of our government is concerned, no success has been achieved by that organisation.

The main argument of the authorities is that this is a private organisation and it cannot be allowed to interfere in our domestic affairs. Moreover, according to the authorities, the representatives of this organisation would be having biased views as an interested party, with pre-conceived notions. Mr. V.S. Seigell, Special Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs had told India Abroad News Service that refusing entry to Amnesty was to "protect our own national interests and we do not want to exploit the already tense situation there for their own propagandist reasons".

Only recently a report of the Committee for Information and Initiative on Punjab has come. According to that over a dozen of cases of extra-judicial execution in Punjab had come to light. This report has elaborately described incidents of State-terrorism documenting the terror unleashed by the in Batala district. It was reported that on the 10th of January a contingent of Punjab Police and Border Security Police swooped down on the village Sarchar with a population of about 4000 people. The S.S.P. according to the report asked the police to round up inhabitants of a particular community of that area. He

ordered the young ones to lie down on their bellies. Then the policemen lashed them with belts and batons. Probably, the idea behind that show was to terrorise the villagers not to give shelter to terrorists. Is it a logical view? How can innocent people be made to suffer? On the one hand the Government wants to root out terrorism, whereas these third degree methods are prone to breed this evils culminating into a spirit of vengeance on account of worst type of humiliation and harassment to innocent people. In fact, such people suspected for harbouring terrorists are most helpless creatures, because if they turn a deaf ear to them they are likely to face a gun fire, and if they accede to the former's request or pressures they run the risk of police wrath, and state terrorism like the one episode mentioned above. Now, the question arises as to which way those innocent people choose?

The saddest commentary of the whole matter is that this Batala episode provides the most glaring example of atrocities being committed by the police. A moot point for our consideration is as to whether the Government can successfully achieve its goal by repression within the framework of a democratic set up? It was in early January that hundreds of sarpanches of various villages had resigned en bloc due to police atrocities perpetrated on them. Formerly the Government ignored them treating them as harbourers of terrorists, but subsequently an enquiry was ordered to be conducted by I.G.P. Mr. C.P. Singh. It was highly distressing to learn that Mr. Gobind Ram, who had inflicted atrocities on the panches and sarpanches was a member of the probe mission. It is extremely sad and disgraceful that those who made complaints to the Governor were again given a thrashing by the police, the reason being their boldness. Only time will tell how many sarpanches will again come to the Governor for making fresh complaints. Will such a policy of woeful repression not distance the people at large from the Government and encourage the so called terrorists to persuade the victi-

mised people to recruit more terrorists. Is this current campaign not vulnerable for breeding terrorism? Should the Government not use tactful means instead of permitting third degree methods to curb terrorists. Former D.G.P. Mr. Ribeiro (now Advisor to the Governor) had freely used the "Bullet for Bullet" exercise but he soon came to realise that it proved to be counter-productive. It must be said to his credit that he had immediately turned his force into a fighting force. Now, in the stated set of circumstances is it not advisable that the Government should change its policy of repression of people of border districts and transfer those who were responsible for committing atrocities on innocent villagers? Not only that, the SSP of Batala should be put to a judicial probe for his afore-mentioned brutalities exceeding the limits and scope of his duties and powers by letting loose a reign of terror and bringing bad name to the government.

G.S. Chadha

D-1/21 Vasant Vihar,  
New Delhi.

Readers are requested to send in their letters typed or neatly handwritten to the Editor, The Forum Gazette, 3 Masjid Road, Jangpura, New Delhi 110 014. Letters may be edited for clarity.

**Sound And Fury**

The biggest enemy of the Congress(I) has always been the Congress (I).  
- Mr. Vasant Sathe.

The CPI(M) is basically interested in clipping the wings of Congress(I), not its total eclipse  
- Frontier.

The Congress(I) legislators have sent this State Assembly to the dogs.  
- Mr. Hashim Abdul Halim, Speaker of the West Bengal Assembly.

When I see you (Congressmen), I lose my faith in God.  
- Mr. Jyoti Basu.

The day Jyoti Basu, son of an upstart, becomes a communist, everyone will become a communist.  
- Nirad C. Chaudhuri.

I am spiritual. I will come through this stronger-I have great karma.  
- Mrs. Pamela Bordes.

Politics would be an even duller business without sex.  
- The Independent, London.

I am a member of that exclusive club of national newspaper editors who have not made love to Miss Bordes.  
- David Montgomery, editor of Today, London.

People in this country don't buy newspapers for their politics.  
- Lord Rothermere, the British Press magnate.

Earlier, the Third Estate spoke and the Fourth Estate wrote, now their roles are different.  
- Mr. V.N. Gadgil AICC (I) general secretary.

Tibet is a mirror in which the people of Hongkong may see their fate.  
- Letter in The Independent.

It is well known that I am the toughest musclemwoman in the State.  
- Mrs. Nandini Satpathy.

I don't know whether Mr Fotedar leaked the (Thakkar) report. He did not have any access to it.  
- Mr. Rajiv Gandhi.

If you ask me honestly, he (Mr Arun Nehru) influenced Thakkar.  
- Mr. Kalpnath Rai.

In Indian politics everything eventually returns to Mrs Indira Gandhi  
- Sunday Mail.

I am not afraid of AIDS.  
- Ravi Shastri.

Punjab is an international issue.,  
- Captain Amrinder Singh in the Sunday Observer.

Every law contrary to Islam will be modified.  
- Mr. Benazir Bhutto.

Khomeini is a dog, no that is too good for him. He is a pig.  
- General Zaki Badr, Egypt's Minister for the Interior.

I was I who introduced bottled water into India, you know.  
- Barbara Cartland.

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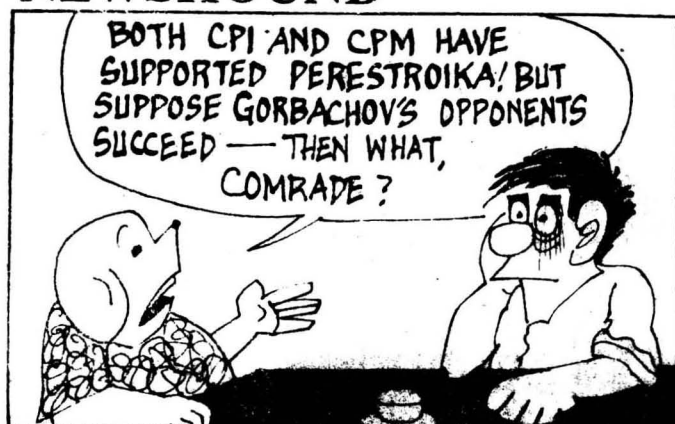
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**NEWSHOUND**



By Rap





- Minority Rights
- Civil Liberties
- Equality For Women
- Democratic Values
- Environmental Protection

## Be Our Own Guards

**E**vents in the Parliament, State legislatures and outside during the last fortnight are clear indications of things to come in relation to forthcoming general elections. We have reached, it seems, at the peak of perversion of politics leading to a politics of manipulation rather than purpose, a quest for power for its own sake.

The fiasco created by the tabling of the Thakkar Commission report in Parliament, statements made by the ruling party leaders and the timing and language of the chargesheet filed against the alleged conspirators of Mrs. Gandhi's assassination are all an indication that the party is repeating its 1984 formula. That is to create a sense of insecurity in the majority community on the issue of terrorism in Punjab, particularly by declaring it responsible for the assassination of Prime Minister on behalf of a minority community and also put the entire opposition on the defensive on the basis of its alleged alliances. Whatever the short term gains, the impact and implications of these for India's political process and development are likely to be deep and lasting.

In 1984 the government was quite successful in manipulating the response of the people on Punjab issue. It made the people ask for what it itself wanted to do. It used the extremists to attack the Akali Dal and then used the reticence of the latter on the question of extremism or its failure to counteract extremists to create prejudices against them and the opposition parties. It was thus able to sway the people away from real economic and political issues.

People's dissatisfaction with the governmental performance and corruption at all levels now is much deep. Therefore need to divert their attention from real economic, social and political issues still greater. The rulers are fully aware of their own selfish policies and the consequent resentment of the people against the rising cost of living, taxation policies of the state, legislation, curtailing civil liberties and democratic rights, ever increasing corruption and declining law and order situation. They are seeing this resentment getting expressed in various types of struggles. The most damaging of all the actions of the depressed people against the rulers can be their conscious use of the electoral process. So to negate the democratic outcome of elections, they have to be manipulated and controlled.

The way things are shaping it is becoming clear that two techniques are being used as the crude ways for this purpose. One is to increase the role of money and muscle power in elections so that brilliant and decent people shy away from them. Second is to whip up communalism to gain votes. In fact in their urge to retain power the rulers are not only preserving caste and communal divides but are giving new meanings to secularism, nationalism and patriotism associating them with specific parties, communities or groups.

This is time therefore for the concerned to realise and make people realise that keeping the Punjab pot boiling, releasing the Thakkar Commission Report in a peculiar way and filing the chargesheet against the alleged conspirators at a particular time and using the type of language are all parts of the strategy to rob the elections of their democratic content. People in general and minorities in particular should be on their guard, not to be trapped in this design.

Most important in this is to understand that the people may be provoked for violence. Violence is not only against our religious and cultural values and traditions but is in fact helpful only to the adversaries. Therefore it should not only be condemned in the severest possible ways but also preparators of violence, whosoever they may be, exposed and isolated. At the same time all concerned must join hands in exposing the state oppression and manipulation and in educating the people of real issues involved in social, economic and political terms.

There is no threat to unity and integrity of the country from any community for all our religious tenets teach their followers love and spirit of sacrifice for the motherland. The threat is to the social harmony and that is from the vested interests. Now it is for the people, for the democrats and for the concerned to realise that they are being trapped. Can we do that? On this rests the future of our democracy and let it be known that democracy does not mean mere conducting of elections.

*I am not ashamed to confess that I am ignorant of what I do not know.*

—Cicero

*To be ignorant of one's ignorance is the malady of the ignorant.*

A.B. ALC...

# A Ploy To Woo The Electorate

By Sampuran Singh

**R**emoval of poverty has been a prominent item on the Government programmes for some years, but the problem is still very much there, staring us in the face, despite the Five Year Plans. In order that the people at the grass-roots level themselves—the main beneficiaries—and not the top echelon are enabled to formulate their needs and aspirations and draw up the plans and then to execute them, the Panchyat Raj can be the best instrument of such social progress. Incidentally, this will be a crucial area for enforcement of democratic decentralisation.

Happily there has been a good deal of talk of late of this reform in all political circles purporting its early introduction. This may be a ploy to woo the electorate, particularly the youth, the 18-21 year olds who are being enfranchised and are likely to be attracted to it as a novel experiment which promises them a modicum of power besides providing them a valuable opportunity for social service. Whether it is a clever gimmick or a plain strategy, it is a welcome masterly move, worthy of a serious trial, albeit belated to promote self—government as directed by Article 40 of the country's Constitution. Actually this is a revival of and political system sponsored by the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee in October, 1959. Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh were quick to adopt it in November, followed by several other states. The system envisaged direct election to the Gram Panchayats at the village level and indirect to the Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads at the Block and District levels. The Gram Panchayat of an area elected the Panchayat Samiti, a non-official body, but assisted by officials under the Block Development Officer looking after tasks relating to agriculture, education, public health, social welfare, etc. (These samitis were really the main hub of the system).

The position at the district level varied in different states, there being both non-official chairmen and the District Collectors in some, the head, or only the District Collector in others, or in still others even I.A.S. officers working as Chief Executive Officers but subordinate to the non-official Chairman. Undoubtedly, there was initially considerable enthusiasm engendered and the system brought forth many ardent young men zealously working for public welfare. But there were originally unforeseen weak points in the system, contradictions in the unclearly marked jurisdictions, resulting in clashes and stalemates between these non-official

enthusiasts who soon grew into mini-centres of power and the politicians who saw in them suprecilious, busy bodies, superfluous rivals and constant road-blocks in

**The isolation of politics and religion is being correctly advocated, but it may remain a dream in our country of multiple religious faiths and practices. But the separation of politics and public interest is an equally desirable slogan. How much one would wish the elections to the village panchayats to be conducted on a party-less pattern! Could not all national and regional parties be brought round to a consensus even in this limited sphere? Are we not in a mood even now to listen to the price-less advice of Jay Prakash Narayan?**

their own pursuit of personal gains camouflaged as 'missions' of public good. The officials, thus wedged in between the two were sometimes involved in inconvenient, and at times comical, situations and had a hostile role to play in the fate that overtook the system. The members of legislative bodies, too, grudged the new local forces of influence and popularity and with the passage of time this scenario of friction and disharmony continued to deteriorate, so that the misuse of, and corruption in, the panchayats which erupted in several areas came handy for the ultimate demise of a reform of considerable promise in 1965.

All this has a lesson for the true welwishers of the Panchayati Raj. The decision to launch the system in the country afresh is both well-conceived and welcome, and it is hoped that sufficient thought will be given to the hurdles which will emerge as of old and will have to be crossed to ensure success for this fresh exercise in democratic decentralisation. In the first place, the powers that be must make a firm resolve to re-start the system not as an experiment but as a permanent dependable channel of many-faceted social progress. Again, the areas of jurisdiction as between the grass-roots level workers, the bureaucracy and the politicians have to be clearly identified and rationally codified to guard against un-healthy, irritating encroachments and interferences. The state cabinets will do well to advise and not impose the will in local and even district level enterprises so that ministerial approval and availability of funds are not allowed to block the execution of properly designed schemes and projects. The legislation and the administrative structure will have necessarily to take care of these considerations. The young element in the village panchayats, comparatively raw and rather immature, may need well-meant advice from the elders so that their projects are properly guarded against becoming victims of wrong direction or faulty execution.

The isolation of politics and religion is being correctly advocated, but it may remain a dream in our country of multiple religious faiths and practices. But the separation of politics and public interest is an equally desirable slogan. How much one would wish the elections to the village panchayats to be conducted on a party-less pattern! Could not all national and regional parties be brought round to a consensus even in this limited sphere? Are we not in a mood even now to listen to the price-less advice of Jay Prakash Narayan?

## Restore Credibility

Continued from page 1

consultation process and the meetings, if and when held, will end up being 'taking shops'.

This is an extreme view of the situation but the realities on the ground in Punjab for the last few years have produced more Cas-sandras than optimists. Every effort after the Punjab accord at assuaging the feelings of the people, particularly the Sikhs, have come to naught. Even the gains of Operation Black Thunder, which created a feeling of revulsion among the Sikhs against the terrorists and the so-called defenders of the faith, were frit-

will be allowed to meet his followers and other leaders while in jail. There is no harm if Mr. Badal too is allowed to do politicking from jail provided something tangible comes out of his efforts. If Mr. Tohra, Mr. Badal and Mr. J.S. Talwandi, U.A.D. President, are able to form a united Akali Dal with the help of Mr. S.S. Barnala, who cannot be written off, it will be good for Punjab and the country. There can be no peace in Punjab without the help of the Akalis and only a united Akali Dal can deliver the goods.

But will the Akalis unite, given their past history and personal

**Normally, an accused in judicial lock-up is not allowed to meet anyone except his near relatives or his lawyer. But here a whole range of Akali leaders are meeting him at the Khalra rest house almost each day and Mr Tohra has demonstrated beyond doubt that he is a force to be reckoned with in Akali and gurdwara politics. But the question is: should a person accused of serious charges be allowed to play politics. If so, what is the sanctity of keeping him in detention?**

tered away by the government by the inept handling of the situation. The government alleged interference in the religious affairs of the Sikhs by propping up Mr. Jasbir Singh Rode, who was arrested on a charge of sedition, cancelled out all the gains.

Something similar is happening again. Though Mr. G.S. Tohra, President, Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, has been set free along with other Jodhpur detenus, another tenuous case has been registered against him on heresay that he supported separatist tendencies. Normally, an accused in judicial lock-up is not allowed to meet anyone except his near relatives or his lawyer. But here a whole range of Akali leaders are meeting him at the Khalra rest house almost each day and Mr. Tohra has demonstrated beyond doubt that he is a force to be reckoned with in Akali and gurdwara politics. But the question is: should a person accused of serious charges be allowed to play politics. If so, what is the sanctity of keeping him in detention?

As Mr. Tohra is not the only force to be reckoned with in Akali politics, Mr. Buta Singh has already hinted that Mr. Prakash Singh Badal, arrested under N.S.A., will be brought shortly to a jail in or near Punjab. The message is quite clear. Mr. Badal too

rivalries. Moreover, the Akalis are not going to bypass the militants and the Talwandi Akali Dal has already demanded the release of Mr. Simranjit Singh Mann, a police officer in detention in Bhagalpur jail and a leader of the Akali Dal (Mann) led by Baba Joginder Singh. In this connection it is relevant to point out that both Mr. Tohra and Mr. Badal have rejected a suggestion of the government to sign a statement saying that they are against Khalistan. They are not willing to be released on any pre-conditions.

This brings us to the basic question of trust, vis a vis the Sikhs and the Akalis, which is the root cause of the Punjab Problem. The Prime Minister's recent package plan, including the release of the Jodhpur detenus and other steps, has no doubt eased the situation but not restored its credibility among the Akalis. The State government is still pursuing with the assumption that the Punjab problem is one of law and order. Everyday four to five persons are being killed by the terrorists and eight to ten 'hard-core' terrorists arrested. There is no reduction in the arms supply from Pakistan nor is there in any depletion in the enrolment of new recruits to terrorist gangs. Any attempt at arriving at a solution of the Punjab problem without restoring the mutual trust is not going to be durable.

## "I Know The Assassin", S.N. Sinha

Continued from page 1

**Why didn't the Thakkar Commission take this thing into account while they were investigating on the assassination?**

It seems that Mr. Thakkar has done his work without considering all the facts. He never considered the point that the assassins of Mrs Gandhi came from Birmingham and had been practicing there for a long time. If the facts are ignored like this there is no point in investigating. The commission should have gone to Birmingham to find out who the real conspirators were and how they hatched the plot.

The Commission must have availed the film that was telecasted by the BBC and they must have questioned the other witnesses there to prove the facts.

**Why were Satwant Singh and Kehar Singh hanged without conducting a thorough investigation?**

Had all the facts been considered Satwant Singh and Kehar Singh would not have been sent to the gallows. I have the issue of the *Times* of London in which the Amnesty

International appealing the Government of India to pardon Kehar Singh. I was shocked to hear that Kehar Singh was hanged to death as that man had no connection with the conspirators or any of their activities. The next day's issue of the *Times* read that the whole situation had been handled in a very secretive manner which raised many questions and it indicated that the government was trying to shield some vital facts about the gruesome killing of Mrs Gandhi.

Yes some vital facts have not been disclosed yet. I am writing a book on this very subject which will discuss in detail all these facts.

**You had a very close relationship with the Nehru family. Did you ever warn Mrs Gandhi against this conspiracy?**

Six months before the day she was murdered I told her in a very explicit manner that some people are trained in Birmingham to take out her life. In fact the third person was one of them. And I can even identify him by face.

**Where is he now?**

The November 1, 1984, edition of the *Times* carried a report that "Both he (Satwant) and inspector Beant were themselves shot by other guards. Beant died. Satwant Singh was taken to hospital where he was said to be recovering. The third assailant was overpowered unharmed and has not been named."

**Don't the government know anything about this third person's involvement? If they know, why is he being protected?**

The government is fully aware of this man's involvement. It seems that the government have no interest in revealing the facts.

**Who helped the third person to escape?**

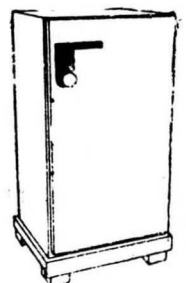
I don't know. But the Supreme Court must investigate into it and examine the film that the BBC telecasted.

**Were Beant Singh and Satwant Singh innocents?**

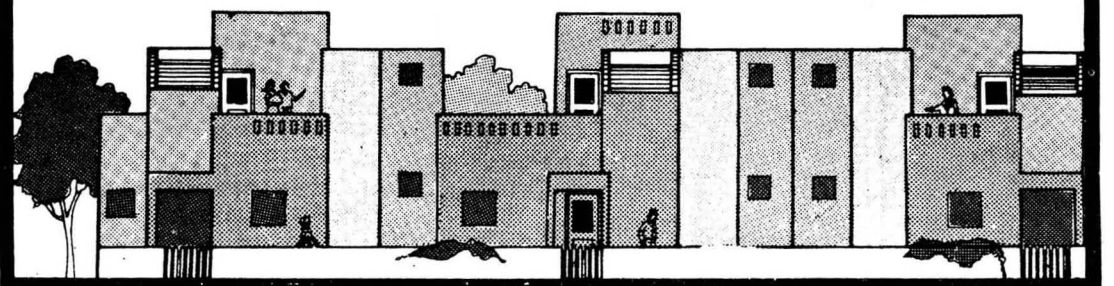
Yes, they were.

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## Bangladesh

# Struggle For Democracy

By Ludwina A. Joseph

**B**angladeshis are often endearingly emotional about their history and recent past and their struggle for identity, even survival. They had twice to fight for independence: first from colonialism, then from the domination of West Pakistan and now, a more insidious sort of patronising, from big brother India. The violent emergence of the country less than twenty years ago is still fresh in people's minds. This is not the case with the present Indian generation, for instance, which is more blase and less uptight about nationalism.

Bangladeshis are first and foremost Bengali. Islamic revivalism is recent date and has more to do with resources coming in from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the Islamic Development Bank. In return Arabic is taught in schools, lavish mosques are built and an expensive centre has sprung up in Dhaka for the teaching of Islamic studies. Although Bangladesh has declared itself an Islamic nation and joined the Islamic Conference, it is certainly much less fundamental or fanatical about religion than other parts of the subcontinent. Unlike the Muslim minority in India, the Hindu minority in Bangladesh is rather well off despite the recent rumblings by pro-Hindu (Swadhin Bangabhum) separatists. Another important minority are the Buddhists who emigrated from Burma and live mainly in the southeast. (In fact Cox's Bazar was so named after a certain British Captain Cox who was appointed in 1798 to resettle Buddhist emigrants from Burma.)

Apart from Christian, Buddhist and Hindu minorities, the people are remarkably homogenous (unlike India) with the same language, background, tradition, religion, dress and food habits. They are not so different from people in West Bengal but perhaps in a way even more progressive. Bangladesh has in fact left West Bengal far behind: the war of liberation, the first unique SAARC Summit and the cultural resurgence. Strangely enough, Bangladesh's cultural links are all with India (West Bengal) and not with its erstwhile masters (West Pakistan). Many Bangladeshis speak of Calcutta nostalgically as their cultural home. They identify better with Rabindranath Tagore's "Amar Sonar Bangla" (my golden Bengal) than they ever did with the alien Urdu/Mughul culture of Islamabad. In fact cultural shows in Dhaka are full of songs by Tagore and Nazrul just as any in Calcutta. The accid-

ent of religion and history and the traumatic division on religious lines of Bengal are the separating factors. The educated elite living in Dhaka, Chittagong or the other cities, constitute less than 20 percent of the population. The rest are illiterate or half-literate, poor and with little or no access to any of the amenities of modern life: health care, education, sanitation and so on. In India most people would be bilingual. However, outside Bangladesh's main towns, it is nearly impossible to make oneself understood (even in the tourist resorts) if one does not know a smattering of Bangla. After throwing off the yoke of Pakistan they have sadly enough and for all practical purposes scrapped Urdu from the school curriculum, the language being a symbol of the previous rulers.

Regrettably also, the upper classes in Dhaka have little time or concern for their more wretched brethren in the countryside. (85 percent of Bangladeshis live below the poverty line). The rich are ostentatious in their lifestyle, particularly the industrialist middle-class, and their savings are often in foreign banks to be drawn upon in case they have suddenly to become refugees abroad. Unlike the Non-Resident Indian, who often returns to India to settle down from jobs in the Middle East, Africa, sometimes even America, expatriate and affluent Bangladeshis would rarely if ever dream of returning permanently to their country if they had a chance to settle elsewhere. Overseas educated Bangladeshis, in business or in Government, with impeccable British accents and a faintly supercilious attitude to their less fortunate countrymen, are something of an anomaly.

The bureaucracy is riddled with corruption, bribery and nepotism and this is openly spoken of. The army too is not free from graft. Bangladesh has its begging bowl firmly held out to all takers, particularly in the West, and there is about \$ 1.5 billion flowing in every year as aid. How much of monetary commodity help actually filters down to the lowest levels is, however, open to question. Reportedly, less than 70 percent of food imports reach the needy in a land that faces a yearly deficit of about 1.5 to 2 million tons.

### Relations With India—A downtrend

**W**hen it comes to ties with India, there appears to be a dichotomy in the Bangladeshi psyche that is hard to reconcile: whether to be a Bengali Muslim or a Muslim Bengali. Pan Islamic forces stress a return to fundamentalism making the "Muslim"

uppermost and the "Bengali" of less importance and advocating, on the one hand, a return (in spirit at least) to Pakistan and, on the other, a coming together with the Islamic fraternity in the Middle East and Arab world. At the Dhaka Club and Press Club there are many who still speak of "the good old days" before the breaking away from West Pakistan!

High-sounding talk of SAARC and regional cooperation is strictly for other forums. Most politicians would still appeal to the baser feelings of a largely uneducated and overly-religious majority that is threatened by the big bogey, India, and would attempt to negate any fellow-feeling with the rest of the subcontinent. An anti-India Press seems to feed this sentiment.

Given the realities of its situation, no Bangladeshi government can afford to be too virulently anti-Indian, whatever the party in power and whatever the line it may have advocated before it came to power. When Bangladesh was formed in 1971, Mrs Gandhi who was then Prime Minister of India, is said to have made certain stip-

ulations to the Awami League Government at the time: no foreign bases, protection of minorities, no communal problems. To a large extent (except as far as the Buddhist tribals from the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the Chakmas, are concerned) Bangladesh has kept its "Promises" and has in fact a better "communal" track record than India.

The fact that Bangladeshis in general have a chip on their shoulder where India is concerned comes as something of a shock to Indians who expect gratitude (at the very least!) for extending support to Dhaka during the 1971 war, forgetting that it suited New Delhi's purpose very well to dismember Pakistan. According to most Indians there would not have been a Bangladesh if it was not for India. While conceding some truth in this, many Bangladeshis feel that New Delhi unnecessarily intervened and shortened the war: perhaps if their struggle for liberation had gone on for longer, they might not so easily have given up the freedom won at such great cost from that struggle to successive

military governments, an argument hard to resist!

The extent of the deterioration of Dhaka's links with New Delhi can best be understood by a small but powerful section of the country's press, the military and political parties substituting India for Pakistan as the "Number One Enemy" in their public smear campaigns, and both uniting against the common foe, particularly after normalisation of relations with Pakistan and the emergence of the United States as the main donor and provider of development assistance. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) led by Begum Khaleda Zia (widow of the last assassinated President Ziaur-Rahman) often whips up anti-India hysteria against Sheikh Hasina Wajed's Awami League. (Hasina is the daughter of the first slain leader and father of the nation "Bangabandhu" Sheikh Mujibur Rahman). The League makes no bones about its very close links with New Delhi and Jamaat-e-Islami (Party) and the pro-Ershad Jatiya party. The latter.

Continued on page 6



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# Struggle For Democracy

Continued from page 5

on occasions, unleashes a well-orchestrated campaign to mar the League's pro-India revivalist image. All in all, India-Baiting appears to be a favourite preoccupation of the political parties and New Delhi has become an easy target to point fingers at and impute imperialistic motives to for a Government harried by internal problems.

According to the history books, in the 1971 war, West Pakistan "practised genocide" and the Americans "fuelled" the effort. The turnaround becomes more ironical when you date back the breakdown of Indo-US ties to President Nixon sending the Seventh Fleet into the Bay of Bengal in 1971 and New Delhi viewing this as an intimidatory and provocative gesture and an excuse to rush into a signing the Treaty of Peace and Friendship with the Soviet Union. The lurking menace of Indo-Soviet hegemony bothers the Bangladeshis. They appear to feel safer with the friendlier-seeming Pak-Sino-US axis.

The Museum in Dhaka has a section devoted to the "War of Liberation" that has almost glossed over any Indian role in the war: a photograph with Indian General Jagjit Singh Aurora and East Pakistan's martial Law Administrator A.A.K. Niazi signing the instrument of surrender in 1971, has a caption omitting Aurora's name altogether and only mentioning Niazi. The support of the West is graphically detailed but not much space is devoted to the six million refugees that poured into India. (In fact many economists feel that the Indian economy has still not recovered from the steep price rise of that period and the extra burden on the Indian exchequer from succouring the refugees. The Assam problem too is directly related to the migration of itinerant East Bengalis seeking employment and entering India clandestinely, even during the days of East Pakistan.)

Apart from the historical aspect and New Delhi's often infuriatingly superior attitude to Dhaka in the NAM, UN and so on, there are several other irritants that mar ties between Bangladesh and India. The problem of redistribution of the Farakka waters and New Delhi's ungenerous stance is only one issue. Another is the embankments put up by both sides along the Muhuri River to enclose fertile silt deposits and India's reluctance to implement the 1974 Indira-Mujib Accord and grant right of way to Bangladesh to reach its enclaves of land within Indian territory. New Delhi has also accused Dhaka of aiding China in fuelling separatist Tripura National Volunteer (TNV) insurgents and Bangladesh has

alleged that the Shanti Bahini (the guerrilla wing of the Chakma tribes fighting for autonomy in the resource-rich region of the Chittagong Hill tracts) has been receiving covert and overt Indian support, besides being trained by the Indian Border Security Force. According to the Indian press, the Bangladesh Rifles or border police is driving out the Chakmas and Tripuris (another tribe) from the Hill Tracts in order to resettle landless people from deltaic over-populated areas such as Faridpur, Barisal and Noakhali in the traditional habitat of the tribals. However, it was only a few months ago (August 1988) that Indo-Bangla relations touched a new low with Dhaka accusing New Delhi of being responsible for the calamitous floods that caused so much havoc and loss of life in Bangladesh. New Delhi retaliated predictably by refusing to allow any third party (China, Nepal) to be involved in much-needed long-term measures of reforestation, soil conservation and flood control, and even blamed Dhaka for "regionalising" and "internationalising" a purely (for India) "bilateral" problem.

It is appalling that India's continued hamhandedness in dealing with (bullying) its small rather prickly neighbours should have forced them into a corner and into a situation in which they put together their wits and "gang up" obstreperously against the dominant apower of the region. Most recently this has been evident with officials from both Kathmandu and Dhaka who justifiably feel that New Delhi does not really want SAARC to progress as a regional grouping or to have contact with any other regional grouping.

## Political Scenario

**B**angladesh has come a long way since 1971 and its struggle for freedom—even a tenuous democracy—snatched from the midst of battlefields and bloodshed; but a democracy that failed miserably in the face of the inevitable Third World afflictions: graft, corruption, assassinations, coups and military governments, with the latter now masquerading as a democracy, having perfected the art of legitimising itself through rigged elections.

Most Indians who remember the 1971 Indo-Pak war that resulted in the emergence of Bangladesh, find it hard to credit the fact that an army man who actually fought on the side of West Pakistan in the Bangladesh liberation struggle should now be ensconced in Dhaka as president. For them it is shocking, too, and a matter of shame that the killers of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman should still be at large, pardoned and even politically rehabilitated.

The recent violent history of two leaders assassinated—indicates perhaps more turbulence and upheaval. General Zia-ur-Rahman, the last assassinated leader, was essentially a popular man. He was also known as an incorruptible person, although one of his most controversial acts still rankles with the freedom fighters was his decision to put to death many of those who participated in Bangladesh's independence movement.

In Dhaka it is said that every institution has been infiltrated by the army, which obviously helps President Ershad to perpetuate his reign, disenchanting Bangladeshis feel that Ershad's worst offence is the corrupting of administrative institutions (not excluding the foreign service) built painstakingly over years and which still manage to survive in New Delhi and Colombo despite government interference and ineptitude.

Ershad has also brought about a coalescence of Bangladesh's military, bureaucratic and political elites in his jatiya party which embraces the right, left and centre. He has no serious challenge to his authority from either of the two women opposing him (Begum Khaleda or Sheikh Hasina) as they are considered to be interested only in personal vendetta. Many have already left Khaleda's Bangladesh Nationalist Party and Hasina herself is not known for her political acumen. Moreover, both

the League and the BNP showed scant respect for democratic norms when they were in power. In any case, Khaleda and Hasina distrust each other more than they hate Ershad, which is perhaps the reason why they have not been able to unite effectively and permanently to oppose his rule. Ershad's success can also be attributed to this striking up personal rapport with other leaders of the subcontinent and the Arab world, which has increased his personal standing and international prestige.

After the popular and successful upsurges for the restoration of the democracy in the Philippines and Pakistan, the people of Bangladesh are more optimistic about change being round the corner for them. But despite the periodic turmoil, endless "hartals" and "bandhs" (strikes) and repeatedly rigged elections that fool no one, Ershad has proved that he has tremendous staying power. Perhaps, too, his strength lies in the fact that he is not by any means as repressive or as corrupt as Marcos or as ruthless as the late Zia-ul-Haq, although there are many Bangladeshis who may not agree with this assessment. Despite everything, Ershad's administration is still a remarkably relaxed and tolerant one, moreso than Islamabad ever pretended to be under Zia.

Ironically enough, the Bengalis

who were always in the vanguard of the freedom struggle and movements for social and religious reform in the subcontinent, are now lagging behind New Delhi, Colombo and Islamabad in ridding themselves of a Government that only pretends to be democratic.

More violent convulsions are likely to occur before Bangladesh can ever achieve a measure of democracy. Ershad has in fact little room to manoeuvre. He must pay lip service to the cause of Islamic solidarity, he must protect himself from the fundamentalists, he must distance himself from India and, above all, he must assure his people of a better standard of living. At home and abroad, the country's economic plight complicates his political problems. Bangladesh suffers from the all-too-familiar Third World dilemma: too many people, too few jobs, too little to eat as well as the disastrously repeated devastation of cyclones and floods; and now a new scourge: fear of the "greenhouse effect". An economic collapse, on which it has been tottering for years, would surely bring a reversion to more authoritarian rule. It is in the interest of both the neighbouring countries and the West to prevent such a collapse (and perhaps to ensure a survival of the status quo) which rather puts paid to the democratic aspirations of the Bangladeshi people.

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By Randhir Chhatwal

# Problems Before The Nation

**T**he Prime Minister while addressing a rally on 4 Apr. at Delhi remarked 'In Punjab the situation has improved considerably'. As against this the statistics of killing given by Governor Ray since the President's rule shows an alarming increase in killing and its continued progressive upward trend. Situation in Punjab is baffling and more baffling is the perception and presentation of those who are at the helm of the affairs.

To check terrorist activity and support from across the border, S. Banerjee (*Times of India* 6 Apr) emphasised the need of 'Provisions of economic security for the inhabitants of the border regions—which so far have remained as neglected areas. While Gurbir Singh till recently Gen. Secty. State Congress Party (in *Times of India* 24 Mar considers the 'State repression especially, during President rule responsible for continued violence in Punjab. The concentration of all power in the Prime Minister's office, he regrets, cannot cope with the massive problem of the nation nor spare time for administration details. The prevailing feeling of disgust (*Statesman* Edt of 5 Apr) is due to 'Progressive trivialization of Politics and manner in which real issues are steadily becoming irrelevant' and concludes with the remark 'The executive have spurned the principle of public accountability. The onus has shifted to ballot box finally to determine what is right and what is wrong'.

## Unabated Terrorism

**W**hy does terrorism continue unabated in Punjab? V.M. Tarkunde in *Indian Express* 4 Apr. answers that 'because it is fed by the ruthless and brutal repression to which selected families as well as whole villages are subjected by the police, and suggests, all police excesses must be stopped! It is the duty of the Punjab Govt. to see that police acts within the bounds of law and in accordance with constitution'. While Gurbir Singh feels that the draconian laws have altered the basic character of the Constitution' and recommends a fresh beginning by deleting such laws and dismantling the apparatus of state repression'. Shri S.K. Singla another Ex-Secretary of Punjab Congress in *TOI* (24 Mar) feels that use of third degree method by police and repression by police on innocent persons are 'built into the prevailing situation'. Nikhil Chakravarty *TOI* 2 Apr regrets that 'most political leaders have reconciled themselves to the idea of protracted police action' and earnestly appeals that, 'what we need in our understanding of Punjab crisis is a clear perception of how the Sikh community looks

at the problems' and time has come to strive, to reach out to the Sikh mind'.

## Required Action:

**P**olice excesses and some fake encounters have now been admitted by the Punjab Govt as well as police. To ascertain whether excesses have been done by Police on innocent citizen, there is an urgent need to establish a 'Popular Grievances redressal system' both at district and State levels which should have respectable persons from public as well as political parties. The least that this system should do after it has established excesses or take encounter is to ensure that the affected innocent person(s) or family should get a personal letter of apology from the Punjab Governor to be personally delivered by a senior civil and police official. Depending on the scale of the excess and injury inflicted, compensation should also be determined and paid immediately. A disciplinary action against the police personnel involved would also be essential. This will not only restore the confidence of the masses in the return to the role of the law in Punjab and end of

The statistics of killing given by Governor Ray since the President's rule shows an alarming increase in killing and its continued progressive upward trend. Situation in Punjab is baffling and more baffling is the perception and presentation of those who are at the helm of the affairs

human rights abuses but will also enhance the reputation of police force and their rapport with the masses which will ultimately curb violence.

## Poll Issue

**H**ow the poll campaign will be oriented by the Congress (I) and opposition parties is the question before the public. Serious preparations are being made to capture the votes of the electorate. To mould public opinion, it is reported that Govt. of India under directive of the Congress party, an editor of a newspaper has been assigned the job to bring out a weekly column and the news papers in various parts of the country are being urged to take this column by the Govt of India representatives, as they obviously feel that they cannot have a better spokesman for the Govt point of view' (*Indian Post* 1 Apr) and at the same time 'not-so-subtle hints are being made to newspapers to drop those of certain other Columnists. It is abundantly clear that 'the ruling party plans a replay of 1984 campaign dubbing the opposition as supporters of secessionists and destabilisers and projecting itself as the main champion of the country's unity and integrity' writes K.K. Katyal in the *Hindu* 7.4.89. Shri Chandan Mitra of *TOI* concludes under 'Nebulous Hindu Vote'-Barring a situation similar to 1984, the nation is unlikely to rally behind any one political party in so spectacular a manner' which can be this 'one' political party needs no elabora-

tion. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's remark at the convention of the National students Union of India that 'opposition side with those who had been helping the assassins of Mrs. Indira Gandhi' show the trend and the type of electioneering we will face now. The attack on Shri Ram Jethmalani on 7 Apr appears to be a small part of this design. Candhan Mitra writes 'Mrs Indira Gandhi, having exhausted most of her political cards after 1980 had begun consciously to carve a new electoral constituency.....to woo the so-called Hindu Vote'. He feels that 'it would be tempting for the ruling party again to play the so-called Hindu Card'. Would it not be more appropriate to call it a "Sikh Card" as anti-Sikh feelings are being whipped up again in the mind of the countrymen. Every party has a right to plan its strategy to win the election. But why an issue which creates hatred amongst the countrymen. K.K. Katyal fears that 'Indira Gandhi's assassination, the main issue in 1984 Lok Sabha Elections looks like dominating the campaign for the coming poll as well'. Such fears are developing in the minds of the people particularly amongst the minorities. Syed Shahabudin

discusses the poll strategy from the Muslim angles in *Times of India* 5 April, 'from the point of view of religious minorities the BJP must be banished to the periphery of national politics' and advises the Muslims 'the Muslim leadership should not lose any time and hold urgent consultations with the leadership of other religious minorities as well as harijans and tribals'. The media has so far projected that communal and caste divide will form the core poll campaign in the coming election. Congress(I) with no achievements to its credit during the five year rule for which it procured massive mandate, the major political, economic and social issues facing the country are likely to be relegated to a corner and made to look-irrelevant. Fresh prosecution case filed on 7 Apr regarding conspiracy to kill Mrs. Indira Gandhi and the threat of 'Hindu Card' being played in the election have again disturbed the minds of the Sikhs. How the opposition parties react to the threat is being keenly watched particularly by the affected minority community. In the circumstances, what is the point in sending Cabinet Committee on Punjab to Chandigarh.

## AN APPEAL

### HELP THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN OF NOVEMBER 1984 WIDOWS

The Sikh Forum is providing financial Assistance for education of orphan children of the violence since early 1984. Since January 1988, this has been transferred to a Trust named "Citizens's Relief Rehabilitation & Education Fund". This trust is duly registered and have obtained IT exemption under section 80G of IT Act 1961 at present valid till 30 Nov 1990.

The sponsoring member/family/organisation who wish to sponsor one or more children will be provided with full particulars of the child i.e., name, age, sex, present address, grade, school and photograph of the child. Minimum monthly stipend required for educating a child is Rs. 75/- or Rs. 900/- (\$75) annually. The number of children who need this assistance is approximately 1200. We have been able to arrange donors for 910 children as well as for those who may withdraw at the end of the year.

We are approaching you with an appeal to enrol yourself as a donor to sponsor as many children's education as you can for five years, if possible.

The draft/cheque should be made in favour of "Citizen's Relief Rehabilitation & Education Fund" and sent to 3, Masjid Road, Jangpura, New Delhi-110014.

Fresh prosecution case filed on April 7 regarding conspiracy to kill Mrs Gandhi and the threat of 'Hindu Card' being played in the election have again disturbed the minds of the Sikhs. How the opposition parties react to the threat is being keenly watched particularly by the affected minority community. In the circumstances, what is the point in sending Cabinet Committee on Punjab to Chandigarh



By Mukul

## Steel Worker

# AT THE MERCY

In the industrial area of Delhi at Wazirpur, in a factory manufacturing steel utensils, works Avadh Kishore. 26 year old Avadh Kishore whose original home is at Sitamadhi, Bihar, says, "I came to Delhi in 1983. Since 1984, I have been working in steel factories. Till date I have worked in around six to seven factories as all the factory owners throw you out of job after some time. There was an accident in March 1988 while working on a machine in a factory. The owner immediately threw me out. Since then I have been jobless. Since the accident my stomach aches constantly. Even in sleep there is pain."

A resident of Gorakhpur, 28 year old Ramanand Prasad, has been working for almost ten years in the Wazirpur industrial area. He works on the 'rola' machine. He has worked in 4 factories till now. He says, "Since 1984, I have been working in the same factory. But there is no record, no ESI card, no holiday, no bonus. After working for 10-12 hours, the monthly pay is only Rs. 700/-. While working on the rola machine, many a times the steel pieces have pierced my body."

25 year old Girija Shah of Rohtas district of Bihar does the work of plate grinding. He stays at

The Wazirpur Industrial Area is one of the major industrial areas of Delhi. There are a large number of factories manufacturing stainless steel utensils and thus a large number of steel workers are based here. As such there are steel factories and workers also at G.T. Karnal Road, Rajasthan Udyog Nagar, Samayapur Badli, Anand Parvat and Okhla Industrial Area. According to estimates, there are around 500 factories of stainless steel utensils and about 50,000 steel workers in Delhi. Also it is estimated that there are around 275 steel factories and about 25,000 steel workers in Wazirpur Industrial area alone.

Most of the factories manufacturing stainless steel utensils are small and medium ones, where there are 10 to 50 workers. The process of manufacturing steel utensils is divided into various stages and most of the factories complete only one or two of these. There are about 15 big factories where there are 100 to 250 workers. Here all the stages of man-

nised and the victims of extreme repression.

Most of the small and medium steel factories of Wazirpur are unregistered and are completely bypassing the factory/shop legislation. Officials of Delhi Administration also agree that several steel factories of Wazirpur do not have legal sanction. Most of the steel factories operate in small, dark, suffocating rooms or sheds or even in the open. The work place is full of raw material and dirt. At times, on seeing the steel factories one does not realise that such difficult and dangerous work is performed on those huge machines. The conditions prevailing in these factories cause accidents, illness and death of workers.

There are many type of workers in the steel factories—steel moulders, cutter machine operators, hydraulic machine workers, those who work with acid, machine operators, those who shape the utensils, polishers, beading machine operators, etc. For these works, besides men,

are manufacturers from rural areas who after working for few years as servant or helper, start working with cutter machine, power press of beading machine. They have acquired skill through their observation, experience and practice. In hours of need, even the helpers and unskilled workers are put on machines.

There is a total disregard for and bypassing of labour laws and the steel workers are victims of extreme exploitation. It would not be an exaggeration to state that for the steel factories of Wazirpur Industrial Area, labour laws and labour department of Delhi Administration do not exist.

The steel factories of Wazirpur operate day and night and the workers have to work 12 hours a day. The monthly wage of all the steel workers is between Rs. 400/- and 750/-. Only at times overtime is given. Besides the monthly wage there is no dearness allowance or benefit given to them—no bonus, no loan, no house or medical allowance. ESI, gratuity, pension, holiday—these kind of facilities or benefits have no place. It is indeed shocking that such a major industrial area of the capital has so many workers who are victims of exploitation and repression of the owners and where even the minimum of labour laws are not implemented.

Most of the steel factories are unregistered and function illegally. Thus there is no record of workers. In a small, ordinary diary their presence and overtime are marked daily. And on the basis of that their monthly wage is paid. Even in the registered factories, very few workers have a proper record or E.S.I card and many of these workers also, after working for years and years remain temporary and are totally dependent on the wishes of the employer. Contractor system also operates in a number of these factories. The contract workers are even paid lesser.

There is no security of job, wage or life of the steel workers. They work on the wishes of owners and contractors and their wage is also fixed arbitrarily. In fact wage cut takes place, no compensation is paid at times of accidents and they are thrown out at any time. To throw out the old workers in the steel factories and to take on new ones is a continuous ongoing process. The steel workers work in these terrible conditions and live in extreme poverty and danger. A worker thrown out from one steel factory of Wazirpur industrial area is not given another job in the same area.

The workers of Delhi steel fac-



Work is hard, remuneration is working in one of the steel city, gets Rs 300 per month



Steel is moving, but life is waning

The maximum number of deaths take place on the machines which 30 inch steel pieces are cut into 1 inch pieces. While working on the machine, small pieces of steel fly like a shot of a bullet. One of the workers' brother lost his eye, covered with blood and his stomach or chest.

the slum area of Wazirpur. He has a family of 12 members. After working for six years, with eight hour work everyday, his monthly income is just Rs.500/-. He says "The owner of my factory has handed over all the work of the factory to the contractors. Now we are all on the mercy of contractors. We have no record, no weekly off. The contractor makes us work according to his will and throws us off one day, whenever he wants."

ufacturing steel utensils are included.

Most of the workers have come from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Some of them are also from Haryana and Rajasthan. The work at steel factories is extremely tedious, full of accidents and diseases. Most of the workers are between the age of 20 and 35. A large number of workers in Delhi are unorganised. But the steel workers of Delhi are the most unorga-

there are also women and child workers. For these various processes involved in making steel utensils, all kinds of skilled, unskilled and semi-skilled workers are needed. Women and child labourers especially work with acid and as helpers.

But the steel workers performing various stages of these hazardous work, do not get any institutional training for this difficult and dangerous work. Most of the workers

factories have been victims of accidents, diseases and deaths. It has been rightly pointed out by Hari Prasad. A steel worker in Wazirpur Industrial Area, that every worker working in the steel factories of Delhi is a victim of small or big accidents at some stage. He works with the fear of accident or death constantly hovering over him and after being disabled, job-



ers Of Delhi

# OF THE OWNER

FG PHOTO



is ba (Mr Ram Kumar, who  
industrial units of our capital

ber of accidents and  
he 'fork's machine on  
pieces are made into 60  
essing the steel piece  
particles escape and  
t, they enter any part  
ly—sometimes the  
or his whole face is  
nd if they enter his  
chest, he dies

less he dies a slow death amidst  
grave poverty.

While doing a survey of the steel  
workers of Wazirpur Industrial  
Area, I saw that in practically every  
house in the slums there are  
worker who have deep marks on  
their hands, legs, stomach, back  
or any other part of the body. Many  
of them have lost their hand or leg  
while working. The number of

workers who are constantly ill,  
extremely weak and who have lost  
their health for ever is enormous.

From recent examples we can  
see how frequent and cruel are the  
deaths of workers in fatal accid-  
ents. On 3rd Oct. 1988, Ramba-  
hadur was killed in an accident  
while working in a steel factory  
(B-28/3). On the 6th of the same  
month, in another accident a  
worker Birendra had died in  
another factory (C-55/1). On 7th  
another worker Amin Kumar was  
killed. On 9th two steel  
workers—Kesh Bahadur and  
Shankar Magar—were seriously  
injured in another accident. On  
18th another worker, Swami, while  
working was injured and later suc-  
cumbed to his wounds.

It is in endless line of accidents  
and deaths. The dead workers or  
those who have been handicapped  
receive no compensation, there is  
no adequate medical facility for the  
injured workers, and there is no  
official enquiry to stop the inhu-  
man conditions of work and the  
extreme negligence of the factory  
owners. The working conditions  
are so atrocious that a worker who  
is injured while working is thrown  
out of job. It is extremely grave but  
also the bitter truth that in the cap-  
ital of the country, in one of the  
major industrial areas, so many  
workers are dying due to inhu-  
man conditions. But to stop this  
and provide minimum health  
norms and life security, there is no  
government action. Instead the  
labour department and the local  
police are residing with the factory  
owners and defending them in  
cases where workers have been  
killed.

Most of the factories of Wazir-  
pur Industrial Area are located at  
extremely dirty, dark and dingy  
places, with no provision for air to  
pass or light to enter. The  
machines are old and they have  
poor maintenance. In the last few  
years new technology has devel-  
oped regarding manufacture of  
steel utensils, new norms have  
developed regarding workers'  
safety but the steel factories of  
Wazirpur have been using the  
same old, outdated machines and  
technology for years. Even a pre-  
liminary look at the steel factories  
of Wazirpur Industrial Area would  
reveal the fact that their present  
structure is bound to lead to accid-  
ents, illness and death. Actually,  
the factories are running at the  
cost of workers' health and life.  
The sole motive of the owner is to  
make a profit and even basic min-  
imum facilities like drinking water,  
cleanliness, adequate space and  
light are not provided. If a worker  
is injured or dies, he is thrown out  
of job and a new worker kept. As

the factories go on, the worker's  
death also go on.

The process of manufacturing  
stainless steel utensils is  
extremely long, difficult, and dan-  
gerous. First the steel is shaped.  
Then the big pieces of steel are cut  
on the cutter machine. Then these  
small pieces are pressed on  
machines to make them 30 inches  
long. Then these pieces are put in  
an acid tank. After this, these  
pieces are again taken to the  
machine where they are further  
elongated into 65 inches. This is  
followed by heating them on fire.  
Again these are put in the acid  
tank. Then these pieces are put in  
the cold 'forh's machine and made  
90 inches long. Then the process  
of moulding it into a utensil starts.  
The 'circle' of the utensil is cut and  
put in the press machine. From it  
the utensil comes out. Then it is  
cut into the proper shape. It is  
twisted and moulded on the bead-  
ing machine. Then it is polished.  
Finally it is ready.

Each and every process invol-  
ves a lot of hard labour and many

smoke. From the five small pieces  
of steel keep coming out which  
pierce the body of the workers.  
The workers working on the cutter  
machine catch the steel piece in  
their bare hands, thus constantly  
receiving shocks which can cause  
the hand to come in the machine.  
The workers catch the steel piece  
with a holder and take it to the  
small hydraulic machine. Many a  
times the hand and the holder are  
engulfed by the fast running  
machine. There is no cover on the  
machine. Also the pieces of steel  
get so hot that if the hand touches  
them, there can be an accident.  
There are no means to protect the  
hands and feet of the workers. The  
acid tank continuously throws poi-  
sonous gas, with the danger of  
hands—legs getting burnt. The  
hands and legs of the workers  
working with acid become abnor-  
mal.

The maximum number of accid-  
ents and deaths take place on the  
'fork's machine on which 30 inch  
pieces are made into 60 inch  
pieces. While pressing the steel

safety of the workers. The work-  
ers just wear a cloth in their neck  
by which only a very small part of  
their body is covered. Even this  
piece is not available in a number  
of factories, or even if it is there it  
is in a battered shape. Besides,  
there are no means available for  
the workers who work with fire.  
Smoke and dust lead to a number  
of diseases. The power press cuts  
the fingers of the workers. The  
beading workers soon develop  
chest and lung diseases.

Most of the workers have no  
legai record. They have no ESI  
card. After an accident, they are  
totally at the mercy of the owner.  
Most of them have their own per-  
sonal doctor with whose help a bit  
of medical aid is given to the  
worker and then he is discharged  
permanently. The workers who  
are victims of serious accidents,  
due to lack of medical aid, remain  
unconscious for many hours. Due  
to this negligence many of them  
lose their lives. Whatever little aid  
they do get is also motivated not  
by concern but for housing up the  
incident. There is no confirmation  
of the disabled or dead workers.  
If at any place the union becomes  
powerful and exerts pressure on  
the owner, then he according to  
his wish gives a small amount in  
the form of compensation.

Thousands of accidents have  
occured in Wazirpur Industrial  
area in which many workers have



Steel is sold, but life is scarred

of them are highly risky. If the  
workers are not equipped with  
proper security measures, the  
danger of accidents increases  
much more.

The steel workers of Wazirpur  
have no security measures. The  
workers who mould the steel wrap  
sacks on thier feet and towels on  
their head. They wear cloth gloves  
on their hands. They catch the  
pieces of steel with bare hands  
and a small holder. These work-  
ers work amidst fire, dust and

piece on the machine, small par-  
ticles escape and like a shot from  
the bullet they enter any part of the  
workers' body—sometimes the  
worker loses his eye, or his whole  
face is covered with blood and if  
they enter his stomach or chest,  
he dies. In this process innumera-  
ble number of workers have been  
seriously injured or had died. The  
machine is without cover and is  
extremely accident prone, and  
so there is no provision for the

lost their lives. But for this crime no  
factory has ever been closed and  
no owner even punished. Whether  
the worker is skilled, un-skilled or  
semi-skilled—all have been vic-  
tims of accidents. Thus mainly the  
inhuman conditions, old  
machines and unsafe technology  
are responsible for these accid-  
ents. In spite of all this, there  
seems to be no action to bring  
about a change in this situation.



By Baiju

**U**ltimate release from matter is the ideal state of existence for the souls. The right faith, right knowledge, right conduct and chastity lead the wayfarer along the path of salvation. One need not have to be a believer for attaining this. What matters is only righteousness. He had to see only his actions right or wrong, then go ahead. Thus attain the status of being a perfect human being. Who said all these glad tidings? Only Lord Mahavir could. And it survived 2,500 years as truth only.

It is time to ponder over these great teachings of Lord Mahavir as Mahavir Jayanti falls on April 18. Mahavir Jayanti is celebrated by the Jains all over the world with great enthusiasm. It is an occasion dedicated to the memory of the great religious teacher Vardhamana Mahavir.

Jainism is one of the oldest religions of India. In the 6th century BC, when Vedic religion was almost extinct and Hinduism was just beginning to put out its roots, Jainism was a mature and flourishing religion. It greatly influenced all religious thinkings of the country.

In the history of the Jains, the most important figure is Mahavir, a contemporary of Gautama Budha, who was the 24th and last *tirthankara* of the Jains. It was he who consolidated the faith and laid such a firm foundation that it has existed almost unchanged for over 2,500 years.

At the age of thirty, Mahavir became an ascetic and wandered about for 12 years, some of them spent in great suffering, after which he gained omniscience and became a mentor. Mahavir died (attained nirvana) in 527 BC at the age of 72.

Jainism did not get much royal

patronage for a few centuries after Mahavir's death. People from trade and commerce were greatly drawn towards it. By the 4th century AD, Jainism had spread to south India with its centre in south-west Karnataka where it was embraced by the rulers, too. Remarkable relics of this period are found in a number of places in

Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. It also flourished in Gujrat, which today is the centre for this religion.

Over 900,000 people are expected to participate in the annual festival of the famous Jain Shrine of Lord Mahavir at Shrimahavir in Sawai Madhopur district of Gujrat by April 18.

The idol of Lord Mahavir was

excavated from a mound on the bank of the Gambhir river about 400 years ago and placed in the temple. The famous 'Ratha Yatra' will be taken out on the concluding day of the festival.

The contribution of the Jains to the cultural heritage of India has been of the highest order. The Jains believe that right faith, right

knowledge, right conduct and chastity lead to the path of salvation. As even the minutest being is believed to have life, the Jain is very careful not to destroy it. Jainism is a monastic religion and the Jain community consists not only of laymen but also of monks and nuns.

## Path of Salvation



The little town that leads to the great temples: Near the river Shetrunji is Palitana, the base town that leads to Shetrunjaya Hill. A devout Jain aspires to visit this hill at least once in his life time.

Jutting into the sky about 591 mts. above sea-level, on top of the sacred Shetrunjaya hill, one of the five most sacred hills of the Jains, there is a conglomeration of 863 Jain shrines built by the devotees during a period spanning 900 years from the 11th century.

## "Politics Without Religion Is Absurd"

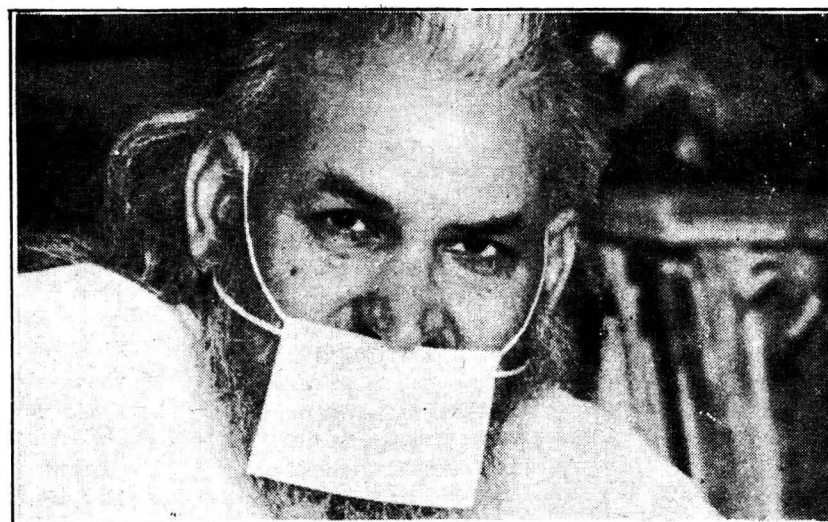
Acharya Muni Sushil Kumar Ji talks  
to Lt. Col. Manohar Singh (Retd)

Muni Ji, how can we attain total salvation?

You have knowledge. But think some time and analyse if you have right knowledge or wrong knowledge. If your conduct is right, if your knowledge is right and if your perception is right, then you are right. And you will get total salvation, nobody can object it.

Is it possible for man to become perfect?

We are children of God. God is perfect, we are also perfect beings. The only thing that we need is that we should awake ourselves, we should know ourselves, we should awake our innerselves. And once you have



Acharya Muni Sushil Kumar Ji

awaken your innerselves, then nobody can say that you are higher or lower, or superior or inferior.

The living being is supreme, complete. But physically, mentally, biologically, or by different kind of environments you have no chance to feel that you are perfect. But human body is the perfect place to awake this kind of perfection. Everybody can awake and obtain it.

Can we survive without killing the other beings?

Yes, we can. There was a belief before Lord Mahavir that without killing no living. If you want to live, you have to kill,

Continued on page 11



## Ram Navami

# Birthday of An Ideal Man

By Neera Swaroop

**L**ife got shaped ages back. So did the Hindu mythology. It took four long *yugas* to reach the present-day life of science and technology. Life has been fluctuating from good to bad and noble to evil during all these thousands of years. But believes seldom change.

To Hindu belief there are three most important gods: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva-the Father, the Preserver and the Destroyer respectively. Out of the three, Vishnu holds and plays a very significant role as far as earthly life is concerned. Whenever the life on earth is confronted with the horror of becoming overpowered by evil, he has taken birth in a human form to conquer evil and let peace and goodwill prevail. Although it is said that he had to abandon his ethereal existence in order to cleanse the world not less than fourteen times, his birth as 'Rama' and 'Krishna' outstand all the other avatars.

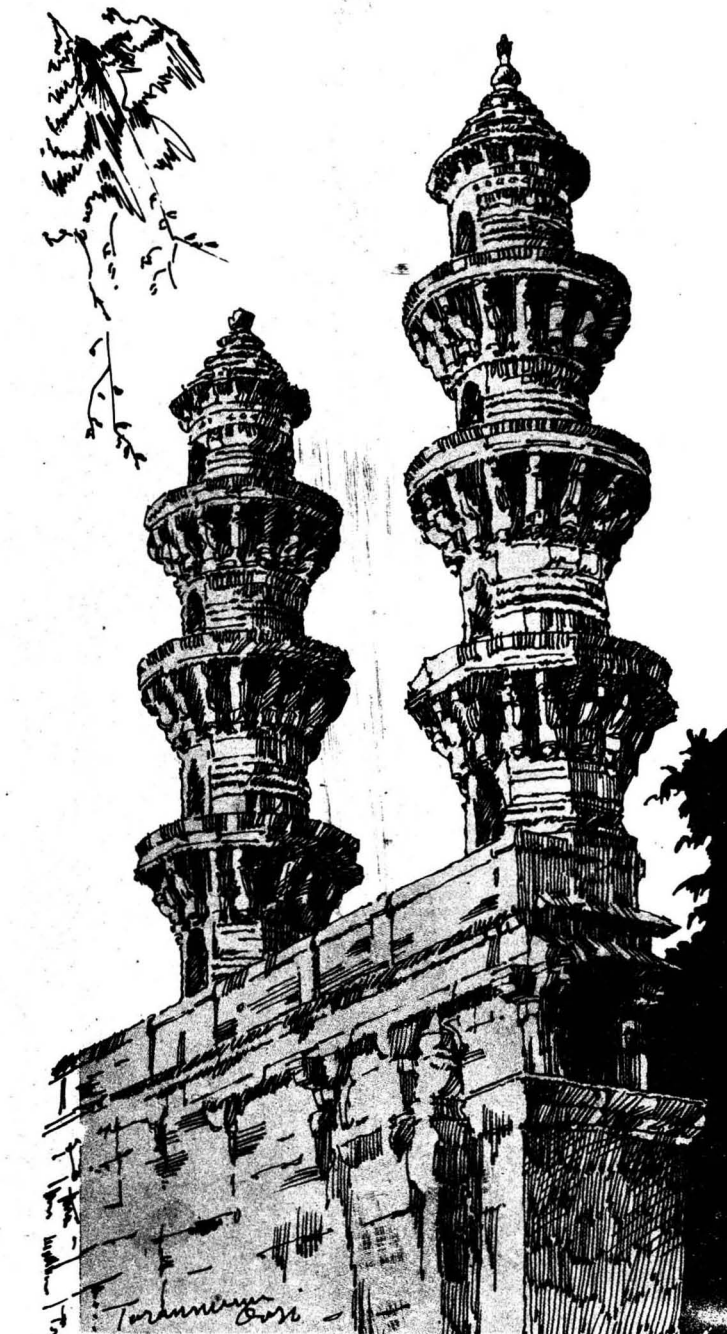
The birthday of Rama, the hero of the epic Ramayana, is celebrated as Ram Navami because he was born at noon on the ninth day of the month of Chaitra. He was the eldest son of Dashrath, King of Ayodhya, and Kaushalya. Embodiment of all virtues he was born at a time when it was neither biting cold nor burning summer, neither exactly spring nor autumn, but a kind of pleasantness prevailed. Rama is symbolic of an ideal man. His actions are neither motivated by passion nor by foolishness but are a result of a right thinking. Welfare of his fellow

beings being the sole source of his inspiration which provokes him to fight and thereby conquer the evil forces. For ages people have been worshipping him and quoting his example to their children in order to make them better human beings.

Ram Navami, which falls on April 14 this year, is the time of rejoicing. This day is celebrated

**The birthday of Rama, the hero of the epic Ramayana, is celebrated as Ram Navami. Embodiment of all virtues Rama is symbolic of an ideal man. His actions are neither motivated by passion nor by foolishness but are a result of a right thinking**

with much fanfare and gusto at the birth place of Rama, Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh. On this day all the temples are a feast for the eyes, the sacred Ramayana is recited and the devout gather on the banks of the river Saryu in order to bathe away all their evils and purify themselves. Most of the devotees keep a fast. For Hindus this is a way of exercising control



over the five senses out of which hunger is the most difficult desire to be overcome. Fast is followed by a feast in the name of Rama on the evening of this day. The break-

ing of the fast is preceded by a long ceremony of *puja*, when the devotees sing the praises of their god and offer his idol a variety of delicacies and the leaves of the

plant *Tulsi*. *Tulsi* and Vishnu are almost synonymous for Hindus. There is a story behind this association.

Once a woman called *Tulsi* used to live happily with her husband, who unfortunately was a man who used to trouble others and was really a *Rakshasa* while she was a much devoted wife. All the *Devatas* were annoyed with his deeds and they pleaded to god Vishnu, the Preserver in the Hindu Trinity, to get rid of him. This was a difficult task, since it was said that no one could harm him until his wife *Tulsi* diverted her attention from her husband. *Tulsi*'s only reality was her husband and nothing else mattered to her. Then god Vishnu intervened. He appeared in front of *Tulsi* in the image of her beloved husband and succeeded in diverting her mind. Meanwhile all the *Devatas* gathered and chopped away the head of *Tulsi*'s husband. He comes to *Tulsi* headless cursing all the *Devatas* for cheating him. *Tulsi* is baffled and by the time she surfaces Vishnu appears in his original form and in all humility while he narrates the deeds of *Tulsi*'s husband. But for *Tulsi* there remains no meaning in life. She asks Vishnu to guide her as she had accepted him as her husband out of innocence. Vishnu blesses this devoted wife and says that she will be worshipped along with him and she was turned into an evergreen plant which was named *Tulsi*. Since then it is must for every devotee to offer Vishnu *Tulsi* leaf in order to please him.

The story gives us a glimpse of the kind hearted nature of god Vishnu. It also reveals that whenever the vessel of evil starts overflowing, God himself had to descend to earth to break it.

### "If a politician has no concern for religion, then what he will be"

Continued from page 10

that was the principle. 'Survival of the fittest', 'Might was right'. Lord Mahavir did not accept this principle. We are living in this world with the help of each other. We are not living by killing.

The living beings can live only with the help of each other. Without help we cannot survive.

**Can violence be eliminated from the world?**

No, it is not possible that you can remove complete violence from the world. But the least violence or maximum non-violence that should be the main ideology. Follow it.

**What do you mean by non-violence or *ahimsa*?**

*Ahimsa* means love. *Ahimsa*

means oneness. No one can kill any being because basically we do not find anything separate or different from us in those being. If you can feel oneness with all living beings, that is non-violence.

**What is the portion of non-violence in politics?**

Non-violence is a remedy for all political problems. You live but let others also live.

**Can politics and religion be mixed?**

A religious person is one who is a servant of God. He is a selfless person, he is a devotee of all the people. Religion is giving complete freedom from

all kinds of bad habits and bad nature. If a politician has no concern for religion then what he will be.

**Religion is a creation of human beings. So the politicians can amend the tenets of the religion to suit their needs. What do you think?**

Religion is not a creation of human beings. It is with him when he takes birth. What man makes are the dogmas, rituals and ceremonies. But the peacefulness, humbleness, truthfulness, service and all those good qualities are natural. That is religion.

**What is the difference between animals and human**

**beings?**

There is no basic difference between animals and human beings. The only difference is that human beings are social animals, too. If you get connection only with dogs or lions, then your own nature will not have much difference.

The most important factor which helped human beings to be social beings is language. But without language animals did not develop the qualities of human beings like thinking more, taking more, doing more and so on.

**What is your message to the readers on the occasion of Mahavir Jayanti?**

The self is possessed of infinite knowledge, infinite bliss and infinite power. This truth

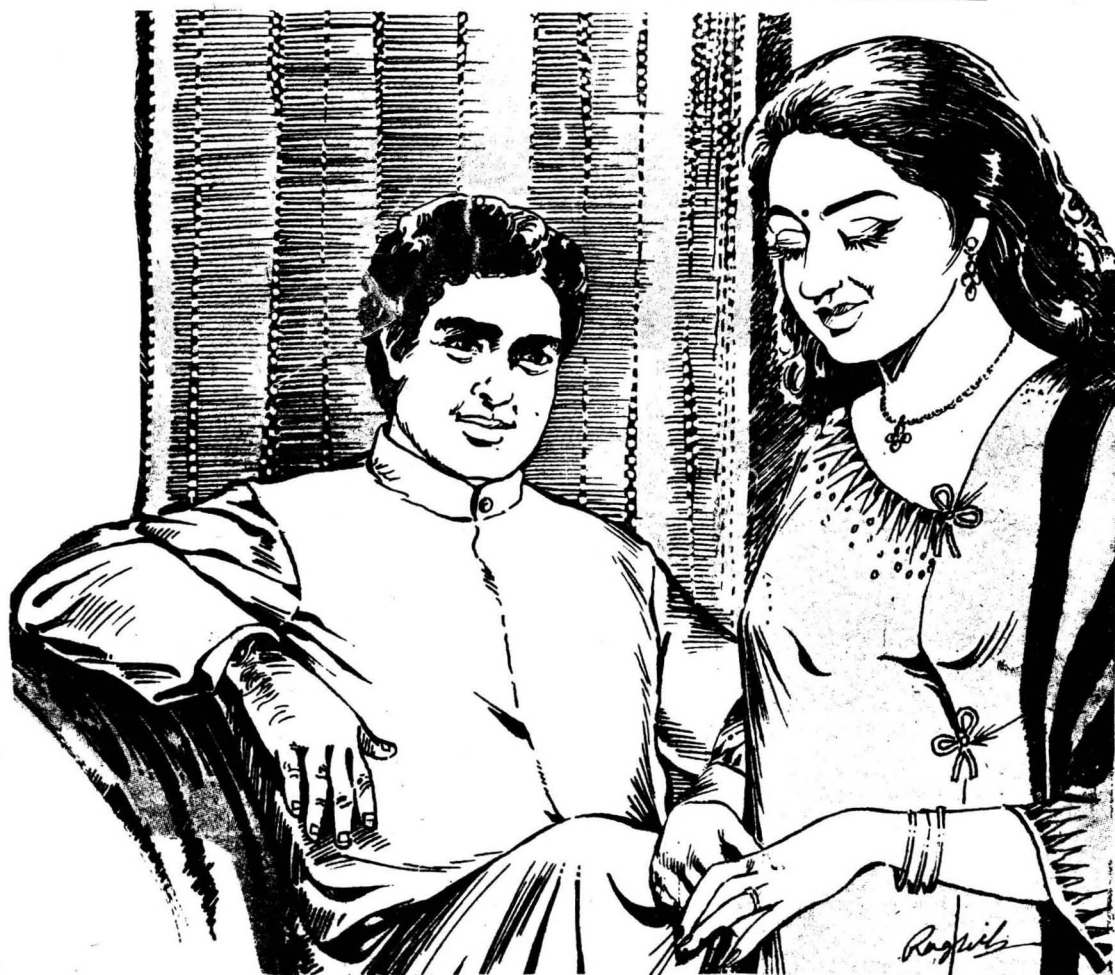
was revealed by Lord Mahavir 2500 years ago. As mind is the root cause of all diseases, lack of spirituality is the fundamental cause of all dissatisfaction. Make the mind strong, all the diseases will disappear. Develop spirituality, all dissatisfaction will die. This can only be achieved by dispassionate thought and detached action.

Freedom from attachment and aversion is essential for spiritual development. The aspirant, who is free from bodily attachment and mental agitation, can come in direct contact with the supreme state of the self.

Thank you, Acharya Muni Sushil Kumar Ji.



# THE CROWNING OF A DREAM



**R**atna Bai had had her dancing show in the Jeemkhana Club's auditorium that day. She received thunderous ovation after her performance. It was not a new thing for her, she always got tremendous adulation wherever she gave her performance. Rather it had become a matter of routine for her. People who showered praises included professors, lawyers, art-critics and businessmen. All of them congratulated her for her excellent performance on the stage. She accepted their compliment smilingly taking this to be a routine matter. Mr. Ketkar, her husband, was overwhelmed with joy to see his wife being showered with unending accolades. He talked to the reporters animatedly in order to get favourable reviews in the morning news papers. Enraptured by the applause, she just smiled in reply to the people's compliments, for she thought her smile would work as a protective shield for herself.

That might have been a routine evening adding a set of fresh memories to the stock, had she not met Mulgaonkar. After removing her make-up, when she climbed down the stage with her husband, a young man of thirty stood before her holding his hands in veneration. It was quite late in the evening; the hall was almost empty except for some workers on the stage. Ratna Bai's attention was diverted by that young man;

By Gurmukh Singh Jeet

The speed with which Ratna Bai and Mulgaonkar had come closer, she and Ketkar fell apart. The gap between husband and wife widened

she stopped in her tracks for a moment. He wanted to talk to her at length but could hardly utter: "Congratulations! What a fine performance!" Flashes in his eyes expressed his gestures which Ratna Bai had understood. She signalled him to follow her. He began to explain her subtle gestures and formations she had exhibited in her performance of Kuchipuri dance given in Karvanji and Bhagwat fair.

Ratna Bai's face glowed when she heard all that. She was surprised to listen to him when he talked of gurus and the traditional institutes which imparted the education of Bharatnatyam. She was so involved in the discussion that she had forgotten about her husband who was standing idle near the car dusting its bonnet, his eyes full of sleep.

"What's your name?" Ratna Bai

asked him smilingly. The shiny pattern drawn along her eyebrows glistened.

"My name! Oh it has no significance. People generally address me as Mulgaonkar," the young man said unruffled. But at the same time he got curious to know what was in her mind.

"Why don't you have dinner with us just now?" Ratna Bai asked looking straight into his eyes smilingly and opened the car's door.

No other moment could have been as more important in his life. He thought himself to be a lucky guy. He thanked Ratna Bai and settled himself in the back seat of the car. Mr. Ketkar had to sit on the front along with the chauffeur.

Ratna Bai talked to Mulgaonkar in details at the dining table, discussing about the gurus, her ballets performed in the European countries, the performances of her contemporaries: Rashan Vajafdar and Rukmani Devi. Mulgaonkar, his eyes down with sleep, took keen interest in her lively conversation, giving his opinion about her postures, formations in her performances. When he compared her postures with the examples given in the *Hust Muktavali* and other classical forms, his words sounded sweet like honey.

After dinner, they all moved to the bedroom, but their discussion seemed to have no end. Ketkar, yawning every other second found it difficult to keep himself awake further. But he had no guts to say

anything to Ratna Bai.

For the first time, someone had talked to her about the finer aspect of the dancing, showing great regards to Ratna Bai. It looked as if she would continue her discussion all through the night. When Ketkar yawned again, she said, "Darling, you look tired! Why don't you sleep in the adjoining room? I shall have to discuss a lot of things with Mulgaonkar." Grudgingly, Ketkar left the bedroom. No one knew when they fell asleep after their conversation.

When Ratna Bai woke up, the sun had travelled quite a distance. Mulgaonkar was fast asleep on the adjoining bed, a strange innocence spread over his face. She felt as if he were still dreaming in his sleep. She wanted to kiss him on the brow but gave up the idea thinking something else.

How strange are the ways of life! Sometime some mysterious sounds meet with the music of life and change its course. Ratna Bai was forty-five at that time and was considered a top ranking danseuse. She had given her many performances in Europe and America. She had also accompanied Uday Shankar's troupe on a foreign trip twice and felt that the effect of her performance was in no way less than the composite group. People from all walks of life came to see her performance in Delhi. Critics wrote reviews applauding her fine recital.

Ketkar married Ratna Bai ten years ago. He found his dreams turning into realities on the day of his marriage when they both carved out their own way of life. Ketkar had returned from America after getting his D.Litt. in Psychology and was appointed as head of the department in Poona University. Ratna Bai had just completed her education in dancing from Guru Chowkalingam. She gave her maiden performance in the university which was highly praised. Ketkar congratulated her after the show. He was immensely attracted by her charm. Whether it was because of her bright brow or well-shaped lips, he could not decide.

The warm sunshine of the young age was replaced by the mist of the middle age. It seemed as if the warmth of their togetherness was rejected by their destinies like torn pieces of a paper lying in the waste-paper basket. At the same time, the warmth of their togetherness gave Ratna Bai a gift of two daughters: Lolita and Mukta. The girls had begun to exude their charms like flowering buds.

It was after years of their marriage that Ratna Bai realized that Ketkar had little interest in her dances, but was only interested either in his research work or books. He always thought of attaining higher status in the field of education. He could not get along well with Ratna Bai and the differences of their thoughts created a gulf between the two. Their indifferent attitude towards

each other spoiled their cordial relationship. Whenever she thought of the growing gulf between them she felt they both had fulfilled each other's desires, lying about their love. Whereas the real love is always beyond the needs of the human body. It is the confluence of the two hearts and souls.

Now, it was not the warmth but the mist of their lives which had seized them. Conscious of each other's existence, they were passing time effortlessly.

When, in the morning, Mulgaonkar opened his eyes, he found Ratna Bai looking at him. Reclining against the back support of her bed, she saw straight in his eyes trying to gauge the intensity of the upheaval raging in him. When he got up, he was surprised to find himself in the new and unfamiliar surroundings. A shade of repentance had covered his radiant face. While bringing tea, Ratna Bai didn't notice that reflection of repentance on his face, for she was lost in her own thoughts.

Mulgaonkar held a cup of tea offered by Ratna Bai. She sat on the other end of the same bed. In-between his sips, he talked of *alaap*, *varnam* and the sun-worship reverentially. She kept on listening to him spellbound.

After sometime when Mulgaonkar had taken his bath, the servant brought the breakfast. Ratna Bai came afresh too. Ketkar also came at the dining table, his eyes full of gloom. She didn't notice his despondency. She told him about Mulgaonkar's knowledge of the finer aspects of the dancing spiritedly.

Suddenly she remembered something; she asked Mulgaonkar, "You have not told me what you do during daytime?"

"I am a sculptor. Have my studio on Maharaj Path lane. I try to infuse elements of dancing art in music in the stones."

Ratna Bai was surprised with his reply. She had heard and read about him and his art, but had not met him before. Ketkar began to turn pages of a newspaper he was holding, he started reading reviews of her performance she had given last evening.

"I am thinking to organise my one-man show presently. I'm really inspired by my last year's exhibition in which many of my pieces fetched me good prices," Mulgaonkar said finishing his tea. He took out a cigarette from Ketkar's tin, lighted it and began to look in the void.

In the meantime Ratna Bai's daughters came ready to go to school. Introducing them to Mulgaonkar, she said, "Pay your respects to uncle."

The girls folded their hands like dolls and uttered: "Ta...Ta..." They left the place, for they were expecting their school bus any moment.

Mulgaonkar had shifted his studio to Ratna Bai's bungalow in Anandvan a few years ago. He

Continued on page 13



# CROWNING OF A DREAM

Continued from page 12

met Ratna Bai many a time before shifting his studio to her bungalow. She had also visited him often asking him to shift to her bungalow when she saw him working in a small room. She had read a lot about the art of sculpting and could talk to him about his works with confidence as he used to discuss her performances authoritatively. Their acquaintances helped them to come closer.

Their closeness had raised many questions in the literary and art i.e. of Poona. There was minimum a gap of fifteen years between them, and to hide that difference of age from others was not an easy task. When any other artist visited her in her bungalow Neel-sadan, Ratna Bai would call Mulgaonkar in a way one was addressing one's junior, but lovingly. He addressed her as aunt giving her motherly stature. He never opened up with Ketkar and addressed him as Kaka like Lolita and Mukta. Ketkar would simply smile away helplessly.

There had been many performances by Ratna Bai in Bombay, Madras, Calcutta and Delhi in the recent past. Mulgaonkar always accompanied her whenever and wherever she went out of town for her concerts. Katkar usually stayed back home, crestfallen, pretending not to have been granted leave. Ratna Bai gave her best performances in the company of Mulgaonkar, who would always sit in the front row among audiences. Critics doled out their praise in their reviews. He also accompanied her once on a trip to America and Europe. Even Mulgaonkar was rated high as sculptor these days.

The speed with which Ratna Bai and Mulgaonkar had come closer, and Ketkar fell apart. The gap between husband and wife widened.

One day, when Ketkar could not stand to their lecherous moves any more, he quietly shifted to the university campus. Lot of rumours kept circling in the art circles for some days. People were worried over the poor state of Ketkar. He was totally cut off from his wife as if an ordinary thing had happened. Now Ratna Bai and Mulgaonkar were seen moving together on almost all the occasions. Sometime they would go towards Fergusson hillock for a walk. While climbing down the hillock, Mulgaonkar would help her descend entwining his arm round her waist. He had no more inhibitions in him now. Rather a feeling of togetherness had seized him. Lolita and Mukta had begun to understand the changing relationship, but never gave any thought to it.

Lolita had passed her senior cambridge and was thinking to join college now. One day Mulgaonkar asked her, "Dear—what do you propose to do further?"

Ratna Bai, sitting nearby was busy reading a book. When she heard Mulgaonkar talking to Lolita, she threw an admiring look at him.

Lolita shrivelled sitting beside Mulgaonkar. Lowly, she said, "I want to join J.J. School of Arts, Kaka. Many of my friends are doing art's course in Bombay."

"Isn't it good if she joins that college, Ratna?" Mulgaonkar asked looking straight in her eyes. "Really a good idea. You go to Bombay any day and talk to the principal of the college. I think you know him well." Ratna Bai said expressing her consent.

It was also decided that before getting her admitted to the arts college, Mulgaonkar would teach Lolita art and art-criticism. He bought many books and began to teach her regularly. Now, Lolita started spending her time with Mulgaonkar in his studio. She had also learnt the use of chisel and hammer on the stone gradually.

Ratna Bai presented a ballet based on Tagore's Samanya-Kshiti in the Ravindershala auditorium of Poona. The ballet won her tremendous acclaim from audiences, but the queen's role she played disturbed her. She often complained sick now, for she had been feeling sad for long. Whenever she saw Lolita and Mulgaonkar discuss art at night, Ratna Bai would let out sighs but in her suppressed voice. When Mulgaonkar desired to know the reason of her sighs, she put him off with a false smile. Instead of talking to each other, they would see each other silently with helplessness, lacking courage to share their feelings.

One day, when Ratna Bai woke up early in the morning, she walked to the studio. She had suddenly fallen ill at night; even breathing became difficult for her. Mulgaonkar lay asleep. She opened the door of the studio and came face to face with her own nude which Mulgaonkar had made five or six years ago. When she saw her own portrait, she was immediately lost in her past memories. Soon she came out of her reverie and tried to bring a smile on her face. She looked around and glanced through the various paintings lying there. Her gaze suddenly stopped at one point, she moved closer to that place and sat on a stool lying their. On a piece of paper 'Mulgaonkar' was written very artistically. Lolita's brushes lay near the sheet. She held a brush in her hand absentmindedly and began to draw doodles, not knowing when she wrote her name before Mulgaonkar's. When she read Ratna Bai Mulgaonkar a faint smile spread across her lips in surprise. The doubt that she had become Ratna Bai Mulgaonkar sent shiver through her body a moment later, although she knew what the truth was.

Ratna Bai wore jeans and had started smoking. She had also begun to take drinks occasionally in the company of Mulgaonkar. She wanted to recall her past years in a bid to overcome the gap between their ages.

When She returned from the studio, Mulgaonkar had woken up by that time and was asking the servant to prepare coffee for him. She lighted a cigarette, puffed at it heavily and let out the clouds of smoke. Mulgaonkar sat silently. The intensity of silence increased many fold. Diverting his eyes off the newspaper, Mulgaonkar looked at Ratna Bai. Tears had swelled up in her eyes. He lowered his eyes in a state of nervousness.

"Darling, we should send Lolita to Bombay now," Ratna Bai said in her soft voice, parting her lips in a faint smile.

"Sure!" Mulgaonkar said without raising his head. He had no courage to look into her eyes full of tears. He tried to overcome his uneasiness pressing at his knuckles.

There was the other side of the coin for Mulgaonkar. His friends had started joking him: "How's your aunt? Why has she stopped giving her performances nowadays?" What could he say to them in reply? Infuriated, a sigh would escape his lips, but he kept his cool.

Ratna Bai had been ailing for most of the time now. He made every possible effort that she got best medical aid, but her condition did not improve much. Something seemed to have been eating her vitals like white ants. Black patches had developed under her eyes; ashen colour subsided the glow on her face. Her well maintained body had withered, changing her face like a burnt-out candle.

Mukta had taken admission in Elphinstone college for her BA classes. Mulgaonkar had begun to avoid Ratna Bai now. His infatuations for Lolita had increased day by day. She visited her mother once or twice a month to know about her health. She would hardly sit for some minutes with her mother and pass her time in Mulgaonkar's studio. He sculpted a beautiful and provocative bust of Lolita during her casual visits from Bombay. They would generally go out for a walk to Pataleshwar cave and Parvati temple in the evening.

One day Mulgaonkar came home late in the evening. He straightaway went to his room. Ratna Bai been waiting for him all day. When she saw him entering his room, she called out her servant from the bed where she was lying. "Kasture, tell your saab to meet me." Mulgaonkar came and sat beside her quietly, his gaze fixed at the floor.

"Dear, don't you feel like enquiring about my health now?"

Ratna Bai asked looking sharply at him.

"It's nothing like that Ratna! I was just tired. There was a discussion on Elova's Sculptures in the art gallery where I spoke at length," Mulgaonkar said in his plain voice. He picked up a phial lying at the small table and began to read its label.

Ratna Bai remained quite. Silence descended upon them.

"Mulgaonkar—do you know I am not only Ratna Bai but Ratna Bai Mulgaonkar for you?" she asked. Her voice trembled like a shadow.

Mulgaonkar felt she had started loathing him now and must be thinking: "Alas! I would have not met him." He suddenly changed his mind when his heart was filled with the feelings of kindness towards her. He kissed her on her forehead and said, "Ratna, how vague by are you taling today?"

"You know, my end is very near now? I don't want to burden you in any way. May be the doctor has told you about this," she said with a touch of bitterness. "You are not kind to me even in my last days! You must remember those bright days which we enjoyed together." Her words lost direction in the darkness.

He kept silent when he found her in anguish, thinking his reply would cause her further pain.

"You must say something Mulgaonkar, even if you have to recall the memories of the past," Ratna Bai said from the bottom of her heart.

Mulgaonkar stood up, spreading a blanket over her. She fell asleep.

Lolita had come to know about her mother's condition which had suddenly become precarious. She was sitting beside her mother, her eyes full of gloom. The gap had widened between mother and daughter. Both of them were thinking over the expanding gap, but were reluctant to discuss it.

Lolita gave her mother a cup of warm milk and left for her room after raking her meal. Ratna Bai saw Lolita's notebook lying on the sidetable. She held it in her hands and began to turn its pages. Many names were scribbled in different styles on a page: Ketkar, Mulgaonkar, Lolita, Mukta, Ratna Bai.... She found 'Lolita Mulgaonkar' written in a line beneath those

names. The words seemed to be pricking at her. A patch of darkness before her eyes. She began thinking over trifles. The figure of Lolita flashed across her mind in the guise of a sister, daughter and then wife.

But the dark clouds disappeared soon and her mind became clear. She took pity on Mulgaonkar. She thought of the long life he was to live. How long could she bind that young man with her old and infirm body! Giving a thought over it, she said to herself "A mand should be allowed to enjoy a pure and inaccessible thing once in life." She then broke out in a laughter. Her mind as now clear from Mulgaonkar's side. She turned sympathetic even to Lolita.

By the evening her condition improved. She told Mulgaonkar that he must take Lolita out for a walk. Mulgaonkar was dumbfound over what Ratna Bai was saying to him. He observed a sort of brightness in her eyes as if they had developed a new kind of nearness. Lolita got ready. The weather was a bit hot. They hired a taxi and reached Bund gardens.

Lolita wore tight jeans and a blouse with loose neck. She had arranged her hair with a hair-do. The front part of her neck down to the chest was glistening like a peak covered with snow in the rising sun. They strolled there for sometime. Mulgaonkar took her hand in his. She drew nearer to him. In the last rays of the setting sun, Mulgaonkar looked at her with eyes full of dreams. The pores on her neck began to shine once again with the sweat-beads. Then the beads started rolling down to her chest.

Breathing became hard for Mulgaonkar; he stared at her in such a way as if he had made up his mind for a certain act. He came closer to Lolita and took that string of beads between his lips before it could vanish in its way to the deep cave of her chest.

Lolita stirred at once. Her whole body began to hemble as if an electric current had passed through it. She took him in her embrace in bewilderment and began to suck his burning lips madly.

(Translated by JAIVRAT KOHLI)

दासी ही खुशमुरती हा गज  
मिम्बे  
**सिम्को**  
रेस डेस  
From the House of  
**SIMCO HAIR FIXER**



## Professor Grammar

### Useful rules to help you with English grammar

Hello again!

**A** Verb that you all know, but a verb that you are always confused with is **have**. In this lesson I will try to explain the different meanings and usages of this simple but most naughty word.

The finites **have**, **has** and **had** are always anomalous when used as auxiliaries in the formation of the perfect tenses:

**He has left. He hasn't left. Has he left?**

**They had left. They hadn't left. Hadn't they left?**

When these finites are not auxiliaries, they are sometimes anomalous and sometimes non-anomalous. There are differences between British and American usage. There are differences in British usage depending on the meaning of the verb.

**Have** is used to indicate possession or ownership. When used in this sense, the finites of **have** are anomalous. In informal style, British English, **have got** is a preferred alternative.

**How many books have you (got)?**

**I haven't (got) enough money for the journey.**

In ordinary American usage, these finites are not anomalous.

**How many pencils do you have?**

**Tom doesn't have a pencil. Does your brother have a bicycle?**

**Have** is used to indicate characteristics and relationships. A sentence with a finite of **have** may often be recomposed with a finite of **be**.

**This room has five windows. There are five windows in this room.**

**This jacket has three pockets. There are three pockets in this jacket.**

**Mary has blue eyes. Mary's eyes are blue. What long hair that fellow has!**

**Isn't that fellow's hair long! How many children have they?**

**How many children are there in the family?**

In British usage, the finites, when used in this way, are anomalous. In colloquial style, the perfect tenses with **got** are often used.

**How many pockets has your jacket got?**

**Hasn't he got long hair! Have you got many friends here?**

In American usage, the finites are non-anomalous.

**How many pockets does your jacket have?**

**Do you have many friends here?**

When **have** is used with such meanings as take, receive and

experience, the finites are non-anomalous in both British and American usage.

**Do you have (=drink) coffee or tea for breakfast?**

Compare (Cf) **Have we (got) (=is there) any coffee in the house?**

**At what time do you have (=take) breakfast?**

**Did you have (=experience) any difficulty in finding the house?**

**Does your teacher often have (=use) visual aids in your classroom?**

**How often do you have (=receive) letters from your brother in Canada?**

Cf **Have you (got) your brother's last letter with you now?**

**How often does your cat have (=give birth to) kittens?**

Cf **Has your cat (got) any kittens now?**

**How often do you have (=receive) English lessons?**

Cf **Have you (=is there, in the time-table) an English lesson this morning?**

A distinction is made in British English between the use of **have** for reference to what is habitual, general or usual and for reference to a particular occasion. This distinction is not typical of American usage. When the reference is to what is general or usual, the finites of **have** are not anomalous. When the reference is to a particular occasion, the finites of **have** are, in British usage, anomalous, or the present perfect tense of **get** may be used. The usage of the past perfect **had got** is less usual.

**Do you have much time for tennis? (ie. as a rule, generally)**

Cf **Have you (got) time for a game of tennis this afternoon?**

**Does that poor boy have enough to eat? (ie. regularly, habitually)**

Cf **Has he (got enough to eat) (ie. now)**

**Do they have much snow in Quebec in winter? (ie. as a rule, generally)**

Cf **Have they (=is there) much snow in Quebec this winter?**

**Do you often have colds?**

Cf **You haven't (got) a cold now, I hope.**

**Have** is used to indicate obligation. Some, but not all, British speakers make the distinction between the use of **have** for what is general or habitual, and for a particular occasion (as noted above)

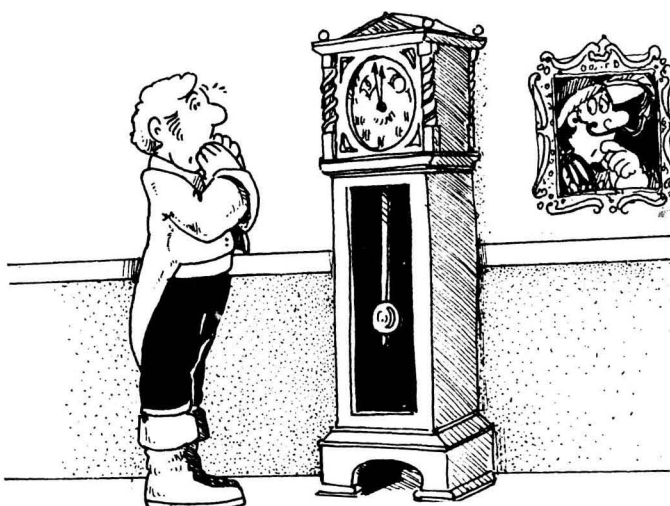
**At what time do you have to (=must you) be in the office every morning?**

Cf **I have to be (or I've got to be) in the office half an hour earlier than usual tomorrow.**

**We don't have to work on Saturday mornings.**

Cf **The firm is busy this week**

## Still In Mystery



### Dream of death

In 1779, Lord Thomas Lyttleton dreamt that he was to die in three days' time at midnight. It upset him so much that the following morning he told all his friends about it. They tried to reassure him that everything would be all right, but he could not get the dream out of his mind. During the following days he suffered bouts of extreme depression as the fatal hour neared.

On the third evening, he invited some guests to dinner in an attempt to forget about the dream. As midnight approached he became more and more depressed. Eventually he could take no more, and retired to his bedroom to await death. He lay on his bed and watched the clock tick away his final seconds. As the clock struck midnight, Lord Lyttleton wondered how he was to die but nothing happened! A few minutes later one of his

so we've got to work tomorrow morning.

In the causative use the finites are not anomalous.

**How often do you have your hair cut?**

**You don't have your hair cut every week, do you?**

**When did you last have your hair cut?**

There are numerous verbs which may be replaced by **have** and a noun (either identical with the verb or related to it), e.g. rest, drink, walk, dine. In these verbal phrases, the finites of **have** are non-anomalous.

**Did you have a pleasant walk?**

**Why don't you lie down and have a rest?**

**Did you have a good sleep?**

Those who wish to speak colloquial English will do well to become familiar with the uses of **have** set out above.

ton. 'I'll be down to join you all shortly'.

When the butler entered the room a little later, he found his lordship lying on the bed gasping for breath. The butler rushed downstairs for help, but it was too late. Lord Lyttleton was dead. 'Well,' said one of the guests, looking at the bedroom clock, 'his dream was almost right, but the time was slightly wrong. It's now half past twelve.'

'No, sir. It is not,' said the butler. 'Because his lordship was so worried, I took the liberty of altering all the household clocks earlier today.' The dream was true—Lyttleton died on the stroke of midnight.

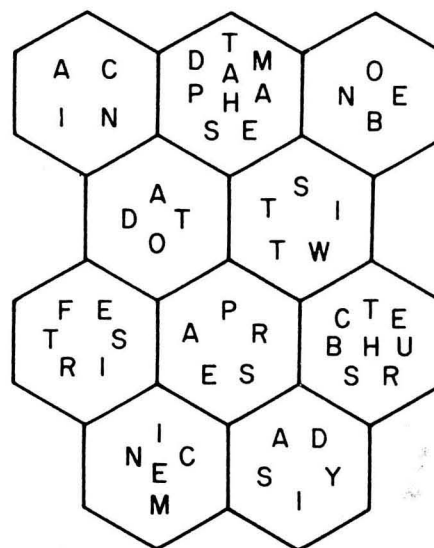
guests looked into the room to see how he was and was surprised to find the Lord in highest of spirits. 'I've beaten death,' cried Lyttle-



## Word's World

### Rhyming Slang

Unscramble the words in the honeycomb to complete the examples of rhyming slang below.



- 1 Teeth: \_\_\_\_\_ (Heath)
- 2 Stairs: (Apples and) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Look: \_\_\_\_\_ (Hook)
- 4 Wife: (Trouble and) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Eyes: \_\_\_\_\_ (Pies)
- 6 Road: (Frog and) \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 'Phone: (Dog and) \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 Table: \_\_\_\_\_ (and Abel)
- 9 Fist: (Oliver) \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 Boots: \_\_\_\_\_ (Roots)

**Answers:** 1. Hampstead, 2. Pears, 3. Butcher's, 4. Strife, 5. Mince, 6. Toad, 7. Bone, 8. Cain, 9. Twist, 10. Daisy.

— Compiled by AC Razia



# Open Universities: The Ivory Towers Thrown Open

**Open Universities: The Ivory Towers Thrown Open,**  
Edited by G. Ram Reddy, New Delhi, Sterling Publishers, 1988, pp 270, Price Rs. 200

By A.S. Narang



In any living Society education as a sociocultural given remains both the substratum as well as a driving force, linking dialectically both the process of reproduction as well as that of change. Yet for centuries all over the world education, particularly the higher education has remained restricted to privileged few in one or other respect. Just as in the economic sphere, in education too there has been a great divide—the gap between the haves and have nots.

The emergence of the new education technologies, as G. Ram

Reddy, editor of the volume suggests, have triggered a revolutionary process, a process which holds the promise of bridging the gulf. Distance Education is one significant development that the new technologies of education have made possible. All over the world the Open Universities are being organised to provide innovative, flexible and high quality distance education.

This obviously also brings to the forth questions of management, performance, Academic Programmes, techniques for providing instructions, and various implications involved in the system. All these issues are being dealt with in one or the other way on the basis of some accepted norms or in accordance with conditions specific. There is a lot to share amongst these and learn from each other particularly at the formative stage. G. Ram Reddy, in this respect has done a great service in editing a volume containing the case studies of 13 open universities from different countries. Most of the papers in this volume were presented at an International Seminar at the time of the foundation laying ceremony of the Indira Gandhi National Open University. According to the editor these papers have been revised and updated. Three papers on countries like Pakistan, Thailand and Sri Lanka and an introductory

chapter providing conceptual perspective to papers in the volume have been added.

In the introductory chapter the editor G. Ram Reddy explains the meaning, importance and role of Distance Education. He points out that providing a second opportunity to study for those who missed such an opportunity earlier is an objective of almost all the open universities. Generally students of open universities have more freedom than their conventional counterparts to choose their courses. Almost all open universities follow the multi-media approach to education. Also educational planners are attracted by the concept of open universities because of their cost-effectiveness.

All these aspects in conditions specific have been discussed in each case study. Terrence R. Morrison and Dipak Saraswati provide information on Athabasca University, Canada. Apart from providing information on the Mission Governance, Faculty and Staff, Academic Programme, Course Planning, production, and delivery, Assessment and Examination system, etc., the essay also refers to perceptions of students as revealed in a survey of the University. According to this the maintaining motivation while meeting various demands of adult and family life seemed to be the greatest challenge of all and 70 percent

of the experienced graduates considered the support of their family and friends to be an extremely important factor, especially for women, in achieving success. According to authors this finding, the importance of the support from family and friends in achieving success, has not been taken into consideration in the designing of distance education system till now.

Manoranjan Mohanty evaluates the Central Radio and Television University of China in the context of current educational reforms in that country, while Zhao Yuhui delineates the functioning and role of this university. Mohanty points out that China seems to be presently overawed by the quantum of advanced knowledge available in the west and is been to get closer to that level, come what may. Yet they are not only concerned with quantitative expansion but are serious about making education widespread and purposive.

G. Ram Reddy and Otto Peters write on the Fernuniversitat in the Federal Republic of Germany in two essays. Two Indian cases of Andhra Pradesh Open University and Indira Gandhi National Open University have been dealt with by C. Narayana Reddy and G. Ram Reddy in different essays. G. Ram Reddy provides the background of the establishment IGNOU, its programmes, structures and expected role. He is of the opinion

that this university will play a leadership role in strengthening distance education in the country as it has great potential to equalise opportunities and take higher education to the doorsteps of the people.

Atwi Suparman writes on Universitas Terbuka of Indonesia, Yoshiya Abe on the Japanese University of the Air, Chan-Dong Kim on the Korea Air and Correspondence University, R. Satyanarayana and B.N. Kaul on the Allama Iqbal Open University Pakistan, Jose Luis Garcia Garrido on The Spanish Uned, D.S. Wijeysekera on the Open University of Sri Lanka, D. Ravindra Prasad on the Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University of Thailand and Ralaph C. Smith writes on the U.K. Open University. All these essays provide information on the background, structure, performances, systems of instructions and some experiences of these universities.

In the concluding chapter Bakshish Singh provides broad outcomes of the Seminar in terms of Identification and preparation of courses, organisational structure, Role of Media, Admission, Evaluation, Financing and Student Support Services.

Of course most of the essays are informative in nature nor evaluative or analytical. But these provide stimulating information for comparative studies and sharing the experiences. From this point of view the book is quite useful both as a reference work and as an exercise for future planning of the process. It can therefore provide necessary background for policy makers, administrators and beneficiaries of the developing system.

## Academic Stultification

By B.S. Rattan

**D**elhi University was the venue of a two-day seminar on Punjab Literary criticism on March 9 & 10, 1989. All the Universities where Punjabi is studied had sent their top academicians to contribute to the deliberations.

Like most seminars, this seminar was also generally repetitive, monotonous and unproductive of any fruitful ideas. The only significant fact that was iterated time and again from the floor was hollowness of the contemporary Punjab literary criticism, in general and of this seminar in particular. The reason for both, however, was identified as one, that is, the preoccupation of the scholars in Punjab with the theories of criticism in the west and the piecemeal application thereof to Punjab literature.

The above approach has remained the fundamental tenor of teachers and students in the universities. It may have served some examination needs, and perhaps helped students gather information, but to imagine that this is also

the rightful literary criticism is to indulge in self-deception of the worst kind. And yet for the last three decades this has been the vogue in Punjab. The professors of Punjab have been living on borrowed plumes and the system has willy-nilly supported them by putting at their disposal patronages and power. The net result has been total academic stultification or at best the production of intellectual clones. This in turn, has not only prevented the development of a living tradition of literary criticism in Punjab but also stalled or misdirected creative effort in this language by setting up false gods for worship.

Most of the papers at this seminar were also narrative, giving the story of the origin, growth and death of western principles of poetics. This kind of narrative itself is second hand being concerned with reiteration, only in a different language, of what has much better been said otherwise.

The only gain of this seminar, if any, may be found in the fact that the dereliction was articulated. It was pointed out that awareness of

neo-criticism in the world is necessary, but this awareness must operate at the level of mental assimilation, that is, understanding of the complex inter-action between literary practice & theory given a particular social-economic-political juncture. However, when we evaluate our own creative effort it must not be done in terms of principles arrived at within a socio-political context that is other than ours. We have to study our own soil & our own people who have their own language which obeys its own unique forces of history. Our principles of literary criticism must be developed from our 'sui generis' literary practice. The Western experience can at best act as an analogy, but never as an icon.

The articulation of dereliction is a sign of intellectual health and moral strength provided there is positive follow-up action. This seems a far cry at present because the organization of the University departments of Punjabi has built up strong vested interests among the professors who are

also literary critics. The material rewards they have been enjoying for so long—including the handsome payment for writing seminar papers—will be the biggest stumbling blocks in discovering fresh & original ideas on their part.

But time will fast-approach when these pseudo-intellectuals will be told off by those who are suffering their brow beatism at present. The vigorous creative work that is taking place in Punjabi Literature will refuse to be strait-jacketed by the stultifying academic criterion of evaluation prevalent today.

To develop a native tradition of literary criticism we should begin asking three fundamental questions. (1) What is the nature of experience developed in the given literary work? (2) What is the form used? (3) How are the expressive resources of language being handled?

For practical purposes we should begin to take our task of reviewing books seriously. It is not a bad idea to write Collective reviews as an essential self-

corrective measure. Children's Literature is a much neglected sphere in Punjabi. We must reflect upon discovering a viable evaluative criteria to judge the worth of what is written for children. In doing this we shall have to be original because there is not much in the world yet that goes by as a complete theory of children's literature. At present theatre in Punjab is a very significant & intense activity. Our scholars have yet to start writing worth while theatre-reviews. By directing our trained minds to the analyses of theatre in Punjabi we are bound to turn original. Similarly, we have also not yet become seized of the significance of cinema. Working in this direction will also free our minds from the intellectual garbage which is choking true scholarship in Punjab today. But for all this we must begin by making individual effort without looking for any organizational support or material reward. It is these determined efforts on the part of individuals which can break the stranglehold on our creative energies.



# OF BORROWED STARS AND BORROWED SOCCER

By I.Gupta

**A** senior division league match between giants East Bengal and mon-descript Tollygunge Agragami. As the teams take the field a rising crescendo reverberates across the ground as the crowd chants 'Chima, Chima, Chima'...."

This Nigerian's dominance is a reflection of the growing dependence on foreign players in Calcutta club soccer. Indeed such is the dependence that during the recently concluded Durand Cup, East Bengal lost those to very matches in which Chima had failed to strike.

Chima who has captivated the appreciative soccer crowd of Calcutta since the mid-eighties is however not the first foreigner to be inducted into the Big Three league. The import had started in the late seventies when two Iranians, Majid Bhaskar and Jamshed Nassiri joined the Bengal ranks. In the past decade the Maidan has been witness to the skills of David Williams, Christopher, Emeka Ezugo, John Devine and now Chibuzor and Julian Camino along with Chima Okerie.

Julian Camino shares the East-Bengal colours with Chima while Chibuzor sports Mohammedan Sportings'.

But who are these stars? How good are they? And why was this import needed?

"It is because the influx from the other states to Calcutta has stopped. Previously any player who wanted to be a footballer used to come to Calcutta. The cream of the country's talent used to be found here.

But in the late seventies when the Punjab sides and the teams from Goa started offering their players more or less equal facilities, the influx stopped, says PK Banerjee.

By the early eighties standards in Calcutta soccer had touched on

an all time low. The clubs were losing membership and money and the stands the crowds. Added to this was the need for a hero. A hero, because soccer though basically a team game has always demanded a superstar for the crowds to worship and especially in the Calcutta brand of soccer where mob hysteria is probably unmatched.

The clubs perceiving the impending doom decided to go in for the short cut method. A deci-

Other than ensuring a slow but steady process of snuffing out the very spirit of the game, the money that the clubs would have invested of grooming local talent, will be lost in enticing these foreign players. These players will be good for the clubs but for national colours they will be ineligible

sion to blood foreign talent and thus begun Calcutta's football falacy.

The club officials retained their positions and all that came with it. The disgruntled voices died away and the crowds returned.

The foreigners, for their part, pumped fresh life into the game. They charmed with their skilful play but most of all impressed with their power, speed and stamina. They helped the clubs win the odd tournaments and trophies by



Chima Okerie: the Nigerian striker

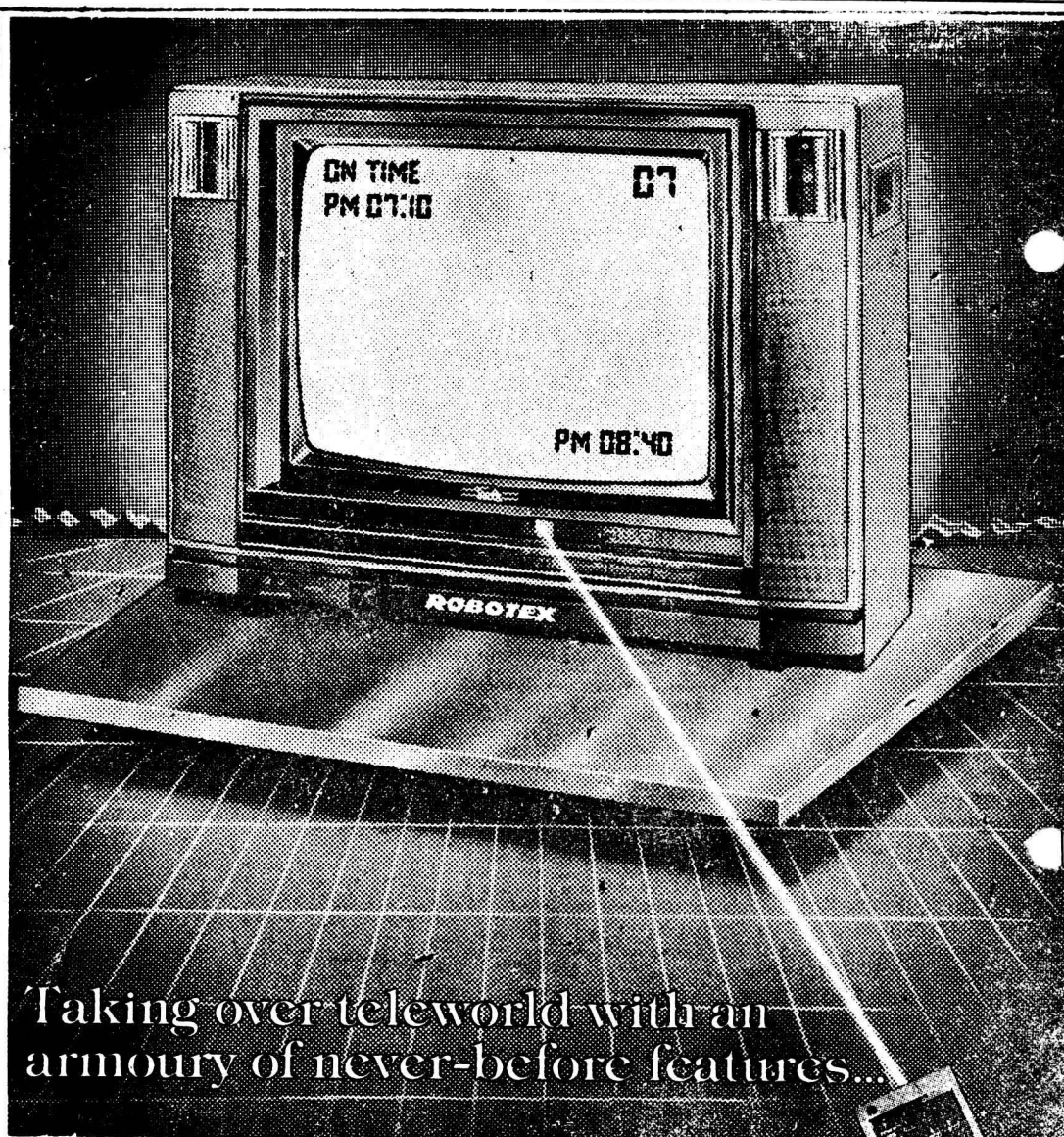
adding that extra edge. And in a short span of time had the soccer crazy millions of Calcutta eating out of their hands.

The clubs sensing victory cashed in on these instant success. What begun as an experiment soon turned into a permanent fixture.

The clubs have filled their coffers but what returns has the game gained in the bargain? Other than ensuring a slow but steady process for snuffing out the very spirit of the game—talent, the money that the clubs would have invested of grooming local talent will be lost in enticing these foreign players. These players will be good for the clubs but for national colours they will be ineligible.

Young talent will stagnate. The state team will suffer and in turn the national squad. The club will get its return, the foreign player his, soccer buff under the mistaken belief his. Only Calcutta soccer will lose.

There will be no new star, no Indian hero. Borrowed heroes and borrowed soccer will rule the Maidan.



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